

BHINNEKA

OCTOBER 2015

YAYASAN BHINNEKA NUSANTARA

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The **'65** **Genocide**
in **Indonesia**
Half a Century after ...



Half a Century '65 **Genocide**

Since The Dutch Colonial era, we have not seen so **many people die or lose their freedom.**

*Taken from **Class Struggle** comic by K. Jati

BHINNEKA

OCTOBER 2015

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*Please spread this magazine
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historical manipulation
in indonesia.*

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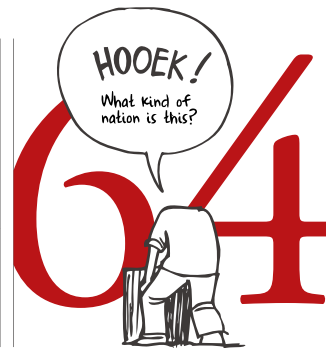
OPINION

Does the Spectre of Communism
Haunt Indonesia?

>> TEDI CHO

COMIC
Propaganda
Product

>> AJI PRASETYO



Timeline: INDONESIA 1965 - 1998

1 October 1965

Dawn: six top generals of the Indonesian Army and one aide are kidnapped from their homes, and murdered. This incident is later known as the G30S.

7 pm: Soeharto announces that he now controls the Army and claims that the murder of the generals is part of the coup plan to seize power from Sukarno.

3 October 1965

The bodies of the generals are discovered in a disused well in Jakarta.

5 October 1965

Burial of the generals. Soeharto blames the PKI (the Indonesian Communist Party) for what happened. Propaganda against the PKI and the left-wing women's organisation (Gerwani) begins widely in the mass media.

18 October 1965

The mass murder of people associated with the PKI erupts across the country.

11 March 1966

Sukarno signs the presidential decree called Supersemar, the original of which is lost. Soeharto's followers claim that this document contains an agreement to transfer power from Sukarno to Soeharto.

1967

March Soeharto is appointed as acting President and then as President the following year, and continues in power until 1998.

1984

The propaganda film Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI (The Treason of G30S/PKI) is released. Students are required to view it and later, it is screened annually on television on September 30. It becomes the most broadcast and the most watched Indonesian film of all time.

21 May 1998

Soeharto is forced to resign but escapes prosecution. His cronies are allowed to remain in power. *

At the end of 1998, a few weeks after my father passed away, I had a huge urge to write about his life story, because my father was imprisoned from 1966 - 69 for his involvement in the Indonesian Communist Party, PKI. However, my mother banned me from doing that. She told me to never talk about my father's imprisonment or about the 1965 bloody incident. *"The government is much better now and we are at least at peace, but if you want too much, the people in power may explode again."*

My mother might have been right. After Joshua Oppenheimer's films *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence*, the people in power in Indonesia have been getting more aggressive, banning discussions and film screenings across the country. This has led many people to believe that Oppenheimer's films had negative impacts on the Indonesian government's policy. The arrest and deportation of Tom Iljas, a former Indonesian political exile who lives in Sweden, underscores this argument. Iljas went to West Sumatra in early October 2015 in search of the grave of his father, who was murdered in 1965. Soon after came the banning of events at the Ubud Literary Festival related to the 1965 massacre.

However, does this mean that bringing up the events of 1965 provokes negative reactions by the government? I completely disagree with this. The government's reactions so far reflect their hysteria and paranoia concerning the truth about 1965. It is the revelation of their masquerade that they are afraid of. So it is really unwise to point a finger at Oppenheimer's films or at anyone else revealing the truth about this genocide.

Nevertheless, the excessive reactions of the government and apparatuses in Indonesia are not merely negative for the 1965 case. The more they react neurotically, the more publicity this incident will get, and the more people will be curious about it. After all, isn't it ridiculous that the government should spend so much effort in disbanding peaceful discussions, but not in tackling real violence committed by radical organisations such as the FPI? And why does the government never carry out proper investigations about the 1965 incident? Why is the government not concerned about people bluffing after committing brutal acts of killing (as shown in Oppenheimer's first film)? Anyone with a conscience will be able to see that the Indonesian government's actions have cast itself in a negative light: they only prove that the government has something to hide by irrationally prohibiting many events that are about to discuss 1965.

Indeed, after the genocide of the people, the genocide of memories usually follows. This is what we are trying to prevent. But we cannot do this alone. We need your help. We need your participation. Please spread this magazine to whomever and in whatever way you can.

{ SOE TJEN MARCHING }

Christina Sumarmiyati

Text : Soe Tjen Marching

Christina Sumarmiyati (bu Mamiek, that is how she is called by many people) was born in Sleman, Yogyakarta on 5 July 1946. I started interviewing her in early 2014 via Facebook and in July 2015, I visited her in her home in Yogya:



”

I still remember the applause when I talked about women's emancipation while dancing as crazy Srikandi, the female warrior figure. I also played in *ketoprak*¹, and I usually acted as an elderly woman who could say whatever I wanted - this was great for me because I could speak my mind and utter any social criticism. I was indeed really active in the organisation IPPI (*Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Indonesia or the Indonesian Student Youth Association*). This organisation was affiliated to the PKI. I became the coordinator in my town and I recruited many new members. We held arts events and took part in eradicating illiteracy. My father was the leader of the BTI in our town so our home was always busy with visitors from our organisations.

In November 1965, my father was arrested. I knew I would be too so I moved and never came home. They kept looking for me but could not find me but they started threatening my family. They worked together with the head of our village that called me and said that if I did not see him immediately, the soldiers would take away my mother and younger siblings.



¹ The traditional Javanese theatre

I decided to come to the office of the village head who asked me to report twice a day at 8 am and at 4 pm. But this was impossible because I went to university in Yogya which is about 25 km from my town. So they asked me to come early in the morning at 6 am. After reporting to the village head, I went to my campus and then I had to report again at 7 pm. After doing this for a few weeks, I was still arrested after the celebration of Mother's Day on December 22, 1965.

This prison I was put in was actually familiar to me because I had done voluntary work here as a kitchen attendant during the training of the organisation *Pemuda Rakyat*, which ended on September 30, 1965. I had knowledge of the ins and outs of this place and I even knew some of the guards here. When there was excess food in the kitchen I always shared it with the soldiers' families so I was able to sneak in my father's clothes along with some money.

Some of the soldiers here were quite nice to me by returning my favour to them when I'd worked in the kitchen and gave me their leftover food too. Of course if other soldiers found out, we could be in trouble so they only communicated with me using sign language to let me know where they left the food and I could pick it up after they went home. I usually shared the food with other inmates especially with the children of Gerwani women who'd followed their mothers into the prison.

When a Priest distributed communion in the prison, I did not waste this opportunity. I said to the Priest that I was a member of PMKRI (The Indonesian Catholic Students Association). I said, *"I've been a member of IPPI, but now I am a member PMKRI and I have not been expelled by my university. I still have the right to study at my campus."* I mentioned the name of my dean. Indeed, I did not tell them that I was a member of IPPI when I applied to university.

Thanks to the help of that priest, I was released on April 16, 1966. Soon after my release, I looked for that priest and asked him to give me a recommendation so that I could go to college again. But that letter was not sufficient. I had to get letters from the police and the District Military Command as well as the head of the village, district, county and province stating that I was not involved in the G30S rebellion. Of course this was not easy but I was determined to get the letters from all of them in order to go to college again.

After I was able to go back to my university, I also applied to become an elementary school teacher to help my family's income. I rented a simple room in Yogya and I had to juggle my teaching and studying. For two years I did both these tasks with hardly any rest. I had to wake up very early in the morning and went to bed early too. But I felt very happy because everything went according to my plans. I also got a scholarship from the priest who had helped me in prison.

One night when I was fast asleep, there was loud banging on the door. Still not fully conscious, I opened the door and saw six men pointing guns to my face. It was around 2 am then and they grilled me with thousands of questions. They asked my full name and after I answered them truthfully, they were still not happy, maybe because they were actually looking for someone else. They accused me of lying and that I had protected guerrilla fighters. My 3 housemates had woken because of the noise but they were all very frightened as well so they kept quiet and just watched.

The soldiers searched the house and found grenades and bullets.

"Whose are these?"

they asked me.

"They belong to a guest who left the stuff here."

"Where is that person now?"

"I don't know."

Actually, the grenades and bullets belonged to me. They were given by a friend of mine who was in the army but supported our struggle. He was formerly also a member of *Pemuda Rakyat* (The People's Youth) so of course I could not tell them his name. Indeed, after I heard that many of our friends had disappeared, I decided to participate in the guerrilla politics. I never told any of this to the officer so I firmly stood by my answer, *"I don't know."* But because of this, my clothes were ripped off and I was ordered to climb the top of a round marble table in the house. Naked, I was bombarded with various questions, but I kept answering, *"I don't know."*



In the end, they were blazing with anger and burnt my hair on my head as well as my pubic hair. I screamed the name of Jesus then lost consciousness.

After I awoke, they ordered me to get dressed and then handcuffed my hands and took me to the office of the district military. I was put in a cell with a man who was also handcuffed like me. In the afternoon, they took us to their office to be interrogated about the political guerrilla without opening our handcuffs. I remained silent. And when they asked about my political activities, I replied that I did not have time for that because I was really busy studying at university as well as teaching. This answer drove them crazy and they gave me a choice to confess or to be placed on top of that man. I answered, "None, because there was no option for me to choose." Instantly, they stripped both of us naked and lifted our bodies by force.

We were placed on top of each other and at once I was in a complete darkness and could not remember anything else afterwards.

I found myself back in my cell, still with handcuffed arms. Soon after, I had a horrible fever for 3 days. The officers decided to send me to Wirogunan Prison which was also in Yogya but not far from the district prison. After the doctor in Wirogunan prison said that I was cured, I was sent back to the district

prison and was interrogated again and tortured again. So they only cured me to enable them to torture me again. If there were new inmates, they often called me and questioned me in front of them to match my answers against them.

They tried to force me to admit that I was a political activist but I kept saying no. Then eight men came and stripped me naked. They held my shoulders, competed for my body and forced me to kiss their penises one by one. Their hands greedily pushed my head on their

crotches. After all that, they were still not satisfied. They dragged me to the middle of the room, then laid me down on the floor and trampled on me. I tried to get strength by remembering the martyrs, especially Saint Catherine and Saint Maximilian Kolbe. After that, my hair was shaved. I was depressed, did not say anything and had no menstruation 8 months.

For one year, I was also not allowed to see my family but perhaps this was better because when my family finally came to meet me, my hair had grown so I did not look too horrible.

Shortly thereafter, I was asked to work at the Commander's home to care for his ailing mother who had asthma. She really liked me massaging her. One day, the commander's daughter

**They tried
to force me
to admit that
I was a political
activist but
I kept saying
no. Then eight
men came and
stripped me
naked.**



lost her ring and I was accused of stealing it. Of course I denied this accusation and I pretended to be sick.

I told them I felt dizzy and I made myself vomit. The ring was eventually found but I still pretended to be sick because I no longer wanted to work there.

I was finally returned to the prison because they considered me to be unhealthy. Of course this made me happier as I did not have to deal with further accusations from them. In prison, we sewed, embroidered and made fake buns to sell from our hair which was falling out. Sometimes we deliberately cut our own hair to create a bun in order to get additional food because the food ration was only 50 ears of corn.

In 1971, I was moved to Semarang where a good friend of mine died - a young activist named Girilyantini who was a former member of IPPI. She was still very young with a tremendous fighting spirit. I just tried my very best to survive because I did not want to give up to the savagery of Soeharto. I remained silent when interrogated although because of this I was more severely tortured. But later I found out how my friends who were more experienced than me could avoid severe torture. They were not silent but pointed to those who had died. After 2 weeks in Semarang, we were dispatched to Plantungan, the former hospital for leprosy patients in the Dutch colonial era.

At the Plantungan prison camp, several of the women started dating the soldiers. Of course, this made many of us anxious especially when the commander approached young girls and I knew what he wanted - to make these girls spies. However, many of us were determined to fight to our death. In any way, we also tried to prevent these young girls from being used by the guards who lured them through dates to arts events and religious activities. Finally, we were also played off against each other especially between the young and older women.

On October 16, 1976 during heavy rains, we were moved to Semarang. But in this prison, we were more at ease because all the officers were female. So we had no worries of being raped and after being moved to Semarang, the Amnesty International team arrived. Shortly thereafter, we were released on September 27, 1978.

Being released from the prison for us meant facing different problems - we were stigmatised as immoral, cheap, atheist women. I was certainly not young anymore after spending a dozen years in prison. Even the women political prisoners who returned with severe disabilities due to torture had failed to touch people's hearts because they had been brainwashed by Soeharto. Many women came out of prison only to see that their families and homes had been possessed by other people who did not want to have anything to do with the ex-political prisoners. Alone, without a job, insulted and condemned by everyone around them - this is what they had to cope with outside of the prison.

Shortly after my release, my parents talked about wedding plans. I was shocked and rejected them spontaneously. It turned out that he was also an ex-political prisoner. In fact, his entire family (father, mother and siblings) had been taken away by the soldiers. His father died on Buru Island. For this reason, he had been in touch with my family for some time. Finally, I understood my parents' choice for me and agreed to marry him.

{ OUR CHILDREN }

On May 6, 1980, our first child was born - **Diana Gabriella Asti**, and on May 5, 1982, my second child was born - **Benny Putranto**. I decided to get sterilised after the second child. We have always been open to my children about our pasts so they knew who their father and mother are - the former political prisoners who were persecuted by Soeharto. I did not want my kids to hear about us from other people.

I worked by selling anything I could - herbs, kerosene, whatever. I also raised my children to be independent. I asked them to deliver merchandise and gave them a salary to pay for their English courses. So I said, "*The course was paid by your own money*" to motivate them to work harder. Eventually my business was running well and I began to track down my old friends. I wanted us to work together and encourage each other. I am determined to continue seeking justice for the female ex-convicts of Soeharto for I am burning with anger for what happened to us.

>> Edited by **MARY FARROW**

{ EX-WOMEN PRISONER }

Torture, Slur Sexual & Harassment

Text : Soe Tjen Marching

My meeting with ex-women prisoners in Yogya started with Christina Sumarmiyati (Bu Mamiek) who was born in Sleman, Yogyakarta on July 5th, 1946. In her house, Bu Mamiek often meets with women victim of '65. As soon as she found out about my visit to Yogya and my plan to interview political prisoners, Bu Mamiek offered to introduce me to women in the community.

I suggested that we interview women who would most benefit from having their stories published in Bhinneka magazine and we decided to go with story of women fighting for their own rights. I hope that readers can assist in spreading these women's stories and their efforts.

{ HARTITI }

I was born on July 7th, 1937, but the person who submitted my ID card to the authorities changed the date to July 7th, 1942. I joined Gerwani (Indonesian Women's Movement), because Sukarno suggested that we (as citizens) become active members of an organisation. At that time Gerwani was very active and their members were friendly and welcoming. My husband worked for a railway company and was active in the labour union. On October 26th 1965 my husband was captured and was accused of being a communist even though he had never joined the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party). I tried to look for him at the CPM (Military Police Corps) station, but they wouldn't tell me the whereabouts of my husband. One of the officer said *"That's Aidit's whore, looking for her husband"*. I replied *"Does that mean all women who are looking for their husbands are whores, including your wife, sir?"*. He was furious and threatened me, *"I'll shoot you"*.



My mother, who was the head of the community, was then imprisoned in early November. She also did not know the reason why she was being help captive. Not long after that, I was taken in. I was taken to Ngupasan police station and interrogated, "Are you in Gerwani, were you in the nude rank? Did you participate in mutilating the generals' penises?". It just happened, the sister of the Police Commander, who I knew quite well, was also held captive. The Commander said, "Whatever it is, you have to reply that you did not mutilate, nor join the nude rank". I did what they said and because of that, they treated me a little better.

Then, I heard that my husband was in Wirogunan but had disappeared. I wanted to know his whereabouts so I started looking for him. I wanted confirmation on whether or not he was alive, or if he'd been killed, and where was he killed. But, there was no answer. Nobody told me anything.

After four months in Wirogunan I was moved in the Fort Vredenburg in Yogya. That's where I met Bu Mamiek. In the fort many people died of food poisoning after eating rotten gaplek. I was so stressed. I was transferred to Wirogunan for a week and after that, moved to Ambarawa prison in Semarang, Central Java.

Then I was taken to Semarang. I was imprisoned for a total of five years. I was released in 1970, but under scrutiny. I did not dare return to my village in Purworejo and resided in Yogya. Even when sleeping, the head of neighbourhood would spy on me. It was difficult to find a job. Luckily, I sew. I ended up offering to sew dresses for people. Now I run my own business selling pillow-cases, dutch wives cases, sheets and hand stitched embroidered table cloth. If you want to make an order please call **(+62) 0857 4304 7826**.

{ MARIA GORETTI SUMILAH }

I was taken on Friday Kliwon (an auspicious day in Javanese calendar), 19th November 1965, because I was dancing the genjer genjer (a dance related to the Communist Party). My mother was selling tongseng curry satay and I was helping her clean up. Suddenly, a truck came and picked me up. They were looking for a woman who was also named Sumilah, but she was much older and worked as a teacher. Instead they got me, the little Sumilah. Yes, they just took me. I was 14 years old at that time. I was loaded into the truck and then imprisoned in Wirogunan. Everything I had on me was taken away: money, necklace, ring, earrings - most of them were gold. Then they started searching for a mark. I didn't understand but later on I realised that they were looking for a Gerwani mark on my body.



*Political Prisoner,
Wrong Identity ”*

After that I was interrogated in a place called Jefferson. I was stripped naked and beaten up. I was molested until I fainted. I only had my father's handkerchief with me. When I regained my conscious I was still naked and I found the handkerchief soaked in blood. I asked them if I could go to the bathroom to wash the handkerchief. Instead, I was beaten up again. I told them I didn't know anything but they forced me to confess that I'm a Gerwani. When I asked for my cloth they told me to stand up and spread my arms and they started to look for the mark again. They beaten me up again and burnt my breasts with a cigarette butt. I still remember the pain and humiliation from when they abused me.

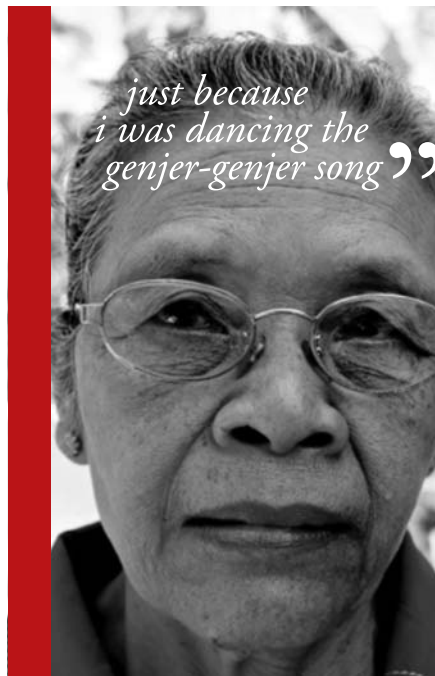
I was moved from prison to prison. In Plantungan I met Bu Mamiek. In 1979 I was released but my youth was gone, all those years were spent in prison. My parents then betrothed me to an ex-political prisoner. We have two children, a girl and a boy, Maria Arumdiwati and Yohanes Bayuaji. I never told my parents what had been done to me in prison. They pushed me to reveal what happened but I refused to tell them anything. This is the first time that I've told my story. After hearing Bu Mamiek tell me about the sexual abuse that she had also endured I felt relieved, I felt as though I could share my story too.

A few years back when I was attending a friend's funeral I met Sumilah, the teacher. Apparently Sumilah the teacher was also captured, but she was only imprisoned for four years. I got 14 years in her place. We shook hands, "I'm Sumilah".

Now I run a satay stall selling curry tongseng. The stall is called "Sate Bu Milah", it's in Prambanan close to Pegadean (auction house), near Prambanan market and trans bus stop. Please drop by my stall when you're in the area.

{ THERESIA KADMIYANTI }

I was educated as a teacher and and taught at Melati kindergarten. Actually I started the kindergarten in my own house and it was under the Gerwani's wings. My dream was to improve education in Indonesia. However, that dream was shattered because I was imprisoned in 1965. Why was I imprisoned? Because I joined in on cultural activities with Lekra (Institute for the People's Culture) and



I performed the Genjer genjer dance. The authorities were also searching for my father but he ran away and hid. But, when he heard that I had been captured, he gave himself in. After that, my second eldest sibling was also captured. My mother went helter-skelter and our family finance were ruined. All my younger siblings had to quit school.

I was first held captive at the end of 1965 and imprisoned in Bantul. I was interrogated in camp and stripped naked. My private part was brutally fondled, I can not retell it in more detail. It's too upsetting!

I was released in 1969. A lieutenant who was a bit kind let me go, his name was lieutenant Kabir. He probably released me because he knew my father and older sibling who had also been imprisoned. I quickly helped my mother with what I could. I sold boiled sweet corn in the market more than 10 km away. I walked to the market. I had to leave home 3 o'clock in the morning. Now I produce handmade bags and wallets. If you're interested, please contact Bu Kadmi **(+62) 0851 0261 8771**.



Without even knowing my crime I was imprisoned... ”

{ YOSEPHINA ENDANG LESTARI }

I was taken on November 27th, 1965. I didn't know why I was taken. It was midnight and drizzling rain. Some men from Bupetra (military subdistrict commando) arrived and asked if I could give them information about the PKI. I was then taken to the sub-district office. My older sibling asked them, "What about tomorrow morning, it's very late now". But they insisted that I had to leave right away. There were many young men but I was not afraid, because I did not feel guilty.

We were all gathered together, mostly men and just two women. The women were asked to strip naked - they were looking for the hammer and sickle mark. Of course, there wasn't one, but they still interrogated me and asked, "*You want to tumble the legal ruling government, don't you? Admit it! Do you own weapons? Why do you have callous palms?*"

I was forced to sign a blank paper. Without even knowing my crime I was imprisoned for 14 years. When I was released I was lucky that my family warmly welcomed me back. I met my husband in Jakarta. He was also an ex- political prisoner, from Buru. We got married in 1981. Now, I'm selling plastic to wrap food in. If you want to order, please contact me on **(+62) 0877 3914 0301**.



Translated by **ATI KRISJANTO**,
reviewed by **CATHERINE COYNE**

VICTIM TESTIMONY

WHY DID THEY TAKE MY FATHER'S LIFE?

{ BASRI BAKO DAN TOGA TAMBUNAN }

20

Why did They take My Father's life?



Ilustrasi berdasarkan foto dari Humala Bako milik Basri Bako

{ TOGA TAMBUNAN'S } *Introduction*

”

In 2010, while visiting the '65 political prisoner victims in Tigalingga, one of the districts in Dairi regency, I was introduced to **Basri Bako**, who told me his life story. While recounting his story, I could feel his soul pulsing and see the unfolding layers of emotion while he wiped off the tears rolling down his cheeks. I could feel his deep bitterness and suggested that he give witness in writing for the sake of human rights. Moreover, until now, the mass media has not revealed enough about the massacre of the victims linked to the '65 tragedy in Tapanuli - North Sumatera.

At the end of April 2015, Basri Bako sent his simple write-up entitled "**A Short History of My Family's Life Before and After 1965**". His story was written on note paper, half folio. He wrote in big characters and the contents consisted of a list of chronological events. His inner turmoil was not reflected, which was very different from when he spoke to me directly during our meeting.

Aside from his note, he attached his hand-written copy of an article on his father, published in a tabloid (**SIRA**) from his region (Dairi-Tapanuli), in 2012. At the same time Soe Tjen Marching was collecting essays on the theme "Half a Century 1965 Genocide". I submitted Basri Bako's notes along with the copy of the SIRA article



{ BASRI BAKO'S } *Testimony*

On Thursday, May 2, 1951, I was born in Tigalingga, a village in North Tapanuli, as the second child of four. My father is Humala Bako and my mother is Fatimah Pasi. Father was born in 1924 and in 1946 he married my mother. Since there were often riots in Pardomuan, father packed up his family and moved to Tigalingga. In this village father worked as a belasting (tax) collector.

My father was strongly against the PRRI (Revolutionary Government of the Republic Indonesia) uprising in 1955. He believed it was better to stay united with Bung Karno's government in NKRI (The United Nation of the Republic of Indonesia), even though at that time propaganda to support PRRI was very aggressive and filled with hatred towards Bung Karno. His life was threatened by PRRI in the midst of hostilities between central government troops or Republic of Indonesia to eradicate the PRRI rebel troops. Together with several of his best friends, who had the same views, father moved to Sidikalang. For his own safety, he often spent the night in military housing, armed with a pistol to protect himself.

My father was strongly against the PRRI uprising in 1955. He believed it was better to stay united with Bung Karno's government in NKRI

In 1957 I began my first year in elementary school. During that same year, father often went to Tarutung, the capitol of North Tapanuli district where he became a Member of Parliament; however, I do not know which faction he belonged to. Even though he adored Sukarno, father did not agree with PP10 which implied that Chinese descendants should be cast out. He sympathised with the Chinese and that stance differentiated him from the others, who tended to support PP10.

Probably because of his fervour and his ability to state his opinion clearly and simply, the people's forum appointed him as the delegation head, which consisted of eight community leaders, to conduct discussions with the North Sumatera regional government and to push for the establishment of Dairi regency as a separate regency from its head in North Tapanuli. Due to that agenda, father became much busier. In 1960, when I was in my third year of elementary school, we moved to Sibolga. That move came about because father was promoted as the head of PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) Tapanuli regional committee and the headquarters was in Sibolga.

The delegation's efforts succeeded. In 1964 the Home minister, at that time, Sanusi Harja Dinata, announced law no.15, 1964 about the formation of the Dairi regional regency second level autonomy commencing on January 1, 1964. The days following that, father became even busier in Sidikalang, which was assigned as the capital of the Dairi regency. He had to prepare the regency governance, governing tools and the concept for the establishment of Dairi regency. After R.N. Maha was elected as regent and Walmantas Habeahan became the regional area secretary, father returned to Sibolga. That was prior to the event, which by its perpetrators is called G.30.S (the September 30th movement). Bung Karno referred to it as Gestok (the October 1st movement).

In early October 1965, Sibolga's military began arresting citizens who were known as leaders and members of PKI, but my father managed to escape arrest. With his friends, **Tokli Rambe** and **R. Boru Sitorus**, he hid in the mountains for about a month. However, our family was held hostage in his place, and we were detained inside the Sibolga's DPRD (Regional House of Representatives) building, close to the Simaremare post office.

In that place of detention, there were a number of local residents with broken legs. Babies were crying. There was a prisoner with his eye ball hanging out of its socket and

another one with a fractured skull. Somebody said that women were raped. All of our family members and my parents' close relatives in Sibolga, totalling nine, were all held prisoner. Nobody was left behind at home.

After a period of time, I was allowed by one of the officers to go home and get rice. I found our house ransacked. Books were thrown all over the place and everything left behind was randomly scattered around the house. Then, I heard someone moaning in pain; when I went out of the house to see, **Pipin Silalahi** was being kicked by an officer and other people until he collapsed. My tulang (uncle) was also beaten until he could no longer move his arms and legs although he still looked alive. Since he could not move, they just dragged him. Pipin Silalahi was my mother's brother, whom I refer to as uncle. I ran to the prison to inform my mother and when she requested help for uncle Pipin to be taken to a hospital, nobody wanted to help; instead, my mother was also beaten.

In that place of detention, there were a number of local residents with broken legs. Babies were crying. There was a prisoner with his eye ball hanging out of its socket and another one with a fractured skull. Somebody said that women were raped.

”

Not long after that, I again heard someone moaning in pain. It was my father; several people were beating him while they dragged him along. It turned out, he was captured in Batu Lobang, an area on the way to Tarutung. His body was covered in blood. A pistol was discharged next to his ear. He was asked to strip off his shirt, and then one of the officers threw it at us and mocked "Take this for a keepsake".

Father was imprisoned in that battered condition and he was in a coma for a month. They just left him without giving him any treatment or medicine. I brought him food, whatever we could give, just to keep him alive. Each time I brought food, before I met my father, the guard would slap me. When father regained consciousness one morning, he said, "Tomorrow, my son, do not bring me rice anymore, because tonight at 10 o'clock we will leave; we will be taken away to who knows where". I passed the message on to my mother and we all cried. The next morning, we heard news that the night before dozens of prisoners were loaded onto several trucks and their eyes were covered with black cloth. Each truck was filled up with prisoners. After that, we never heard any more news from father. His life along with the others were taken away. All of them just disappeared. I was still in my second year of secondary school.

His body was covered in blood. A pistol was discharged next to his ear. He was asked to strip off his shirt, and then one of the officers threw it at us and mocked
"Take this for a keepsake".

After those events, we were ordered to leave Sibolga and return home to our village in Dairi, without any transportation money. We were just boarded onto an oplet (mini bus) and told to leave. In that mini bus, the conductor continuously hit my head as he told me to move every time a new passenger got on, until my head was aching and swollen. The mini bus stopped at Balige whereas Dairi was still a long distance away, so we just stood by the roadside near a rice field. It was seven in the evening. The surroundings were quiet and dusk was turning into darkness. We were all stunned and did not know where to go or what to do.

An old man who was passing by and heard crying, approached us and asked, *"Why are you all here? Who are you?"* After mother told him briefly what had happened, the old man took us to the community house, and brought us porridge and cassava. My swollen head was rubbed with some kind of medicine. The next morning, the old man helped us get on mini bus no.17 heading to Sidikalang and at eight o'clock in the evening we arrived in Sidikalang and immediately headed to my grandfather's house on my father's side. Grandfather was divorced and remarried, and since grandfather's wife did not want us inside the house, we were only allowed to stay under the house which was on stilts. Grandfather had a big argument with my step grandmother about that but in the end, he took us to my mother's younger sister's house; however, her husband, my uncle, was afraid to accommodate us. Grandfather then decided to take us back to his house. For two years we lived there under the rule that we had to run into the bush every time we heard a car coming.

When my father's mother, who had already remarried, heard that we staying at grandfather's house, she immediately came to pick us up and bring us to her house. Once we were in grandmother's house, we could once again enjoy the delicious taste of rice, even though only half a portion per person, and then to fill up our stomachs we ate sweet potatoes. Over the last two years we had not touched any rice.

My mother did her best to support us by cultivating the land my father inherited from his parents. My father was first in the line of inheritance. We, the four siblings, helped mother cultivate the land. However, our farming efforts were stopped by my father's step brothers, as the second and third in line of inheritance. They told us that we did not have any right to the land as we were a communist's children. Father's step-brothers sold the land to a criminal organization and that's how they managed to get rid of us. They even had the heart to drag my sister to the Sidikalang's court of law - she was accused of occupying land as a squatter and thus, taking over other people's land. She lost; the land hoodlums won the case.

In 2013, I went to Sibolga and set aside some time to visit Haposan Siregar's parents, one of the persons who was detained in 1965. I only met Haposan's wife, who did not know the whereabouts of her husband after he was taken away by an officer. She only heard news from several people that all of the people who were taken during the G30S event, those who were taken out of the prison by officers, had been killed in a gruesome manner; some of them were killed on the bridge facing Barus and the others on the Aek Raisan bridge facing Tarutung. At that time, people passing the road on those bridges saw dried blood smeared all over the place.

As I mentioned earlier, my father was the one who fought for Dairi's regency status, though until now, during each Dairi regency anniversary, my father's name is never mentioned. I do not intend to start a feud with anybody, I only want to know, dear people with high status, why was my father's life taken away? Where was he killed? Wasn't my father a member of the Regional House of Representatives from a legal political party? If my father was suspected to have a criminal link, or to have committed a political crime, why has it not been investigated and brought to a court of justice?

>> Translated by **ATI KRISJANTO**
and reviewed by **PATRICK**
HOUTERMAN

...dear people with high status, why was my father's life taken away? Where was he killed? Wasn't my father a member of the Regional House of Representatives from a legal political party?

MY SCHOLARSHIP WAS REVOKED BECAUSE I AM A DAUGHTER OF A COMMUNIST

{ NINUK SETYA UTAMI }

Mas ¹ Suprih (Prih Setyo Widodo) was still in my mother's womb when my father was taken away by soldiers. My other brother Haryono, better known as Tavip, was not even six months old yet. Tavip was a name given by *Pakde* ² Parto, our neighbour who was taken to Nusakambangan in the following days - "I named him Tavip from the words 'Vivere Peri Coloso' because he was born in a dangerous year."

My father Soetardjo, also known as Inthuk, was arrested by RPKAD (The Indonesian Army Special Forces) -- my mother pronounced it '*erpekad*'. Just like our neighbours and other family members who had been arrested, my father did not know what he did wrong. My father, who was a tailor, did have several customers who joined the PKI ³. However, because of this, my father was also considered a communist or a PKI member.

My mother was traumatised every time she saw men in uniform with the exception of her brothers in law who were medical personnels. *Pakde* Minto and *Pakde* Karno were known more as Chief Assistants of Medicine rather than soldiers. After my father was arrested, the slight glimpse of military uniform frightened my mother - "When the arrest happened I was held at gun point. They ordered me to squat. I held *mas* Tavip. My body was shaking. I did not dare to cry and did nothing when the RPKAD soldiers ransacked our home, took our rice, eggs and clothes. They took all our god too."





BHINNEKA / SEPTEMBER 2015

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My scholarship was revoked because i am
a daughter of a communist

Our father had already been arrested and our neighbour, *Pak 4* Parman, who was a cadre of the PKI was dragged out of his house. My mother said that later on, his legs and hands were tied to a horse and dragged around the road passing our house several times. My mother still remembers how Pak Parman screamed in pain when the horse ran passed our home for the first time. Later, he moaned softly. Finally, he made no sound at all. His body was destroyed because he had been dragged to death.

After witnessing such a horrific incident, my mother was depressed and had to be hospitalised. The two daughters of Pak Parman are still alive, both were married off to army personnel by his brother. "People said they were marriages of convenience for their safety," said mother. Pak Parman's daughters (Mar and Pling) were only infants when their father was killed. They were eventually adopted by a soldier named Hadi.

THE NECESSITY TO STEAL

When I was in Elementary School, my father told us about his imprisonment while sewing. Father said that at the beginning of serving his time in prison, the room was so full that every prisoner sat on top of each other even while they were asleep. "Every bone in my body felt broken," he said. The toilets were also crowded with people.

Day by day, there was more space in the prison because hundreds of people died from hunger, pain or torture. People fought over the clothes of those who died. People who survived were tortured continuously. *Pakde* Prapto's back was bent as a result of beating.

Pak Prapto (Suprapto) was known as a Chief of the PKI in Talang Village, Sukoharjo (Central Java). *Pakde* Harto was the eldest sibling of my father and he was never arrested. *Pakde* Harto soon moved from Talang Village to Baron, Solo, when the massive capture of people who were accused of being involved in the murder of generals in Jakarta took place.

A close friend of my father who was also a former political prisoner told me that the prisoners ate lizards, cockroaches, grasshoppers and other insects or animals they could find to fill their stomachs. "Roasted-rat was delicious, but the most delicious was stolen chicken, as long as we were not caught," said my father's friend who biked everywhere.

"Stealing was a must for every prisoner to overcome their hunger," my father told me. They even had to steal the plants they had planted themselves to survive. Those who were caught were beaten severely, being stepped on, or anything the warden wanted to do to them. One time, a prisoner wanted to commit suicide so he let himself be caught stealing food. Unfortunately he was brutally tortured before he died.

The letter regarding the release of political prisoners from temporary custody mentions my father's number - 8887/A7/Djateng. I assumed that the number was my father's prisoner number. The letter also mentions the start date of the custody in Nusakambangan on November 20th 1965. However, there was no information that my father was sent to Buru Island - "Maybe they thought I was someone else. Indeed I was sent to Buru Island and suddenly was sent back to Nusakambangan." There was indeed a lot of administrative mess at the time, even though it concerned the lives of people.

PROSTITUTION

My mother and father often told me about our neighbours or their family members who were tortured to death. One of them was Pak Atmo Ledung. He was shot in Bacem Bridge. His wife, Atmo Ledung, became a widow and tried to make a living for herself and her children by giving massages. Once I asked her to massage me and she mumbled, "Your mother is much luckier than me."

My mother told me that when their husbands were detained, some members of our extended families had to become prostitutes to earn money. "A" was not your uncle's son. 'X' had to marry a soldier so her kids could eat. One of your aunts had to become prostitute after her husband was captured."

*Roasted-rat was
delicious, but the most
delicious was stolen
chicken, as long as we
were not caught.*

*If we dared to vote for another party, we
would certainly be returned to prison.
That was why Golkar always won.*

BECAUSE YOU ARE A DAUGHTER OF A PKI

My father was temporarily released in July 30, 1971. My father's identity card had the stamp ET ⁵. Because of their ET stamps, my father and his friends who were former political prisoners were obliged to vote for Golkar ⁶. Father said that the ballot papers for former prisoners were different from ordinary papers - "If we dared to vote for another party, we would certainly be returned to prison. That was why Golkar always won."

I was still in Junior High School when suddenly about ten soldiers came to my house. I still remembered what happened between the years 1991 or 1992. They all carried guns. All of us were told to squat. One of them was interrogating my father, the others were checking our cupboards and made a mess, examining every suspicious corner. Our books and even my school textbooks were confiscated. Father asked us not to think about the incident any more.

That incident was not the end of the New Order's terror

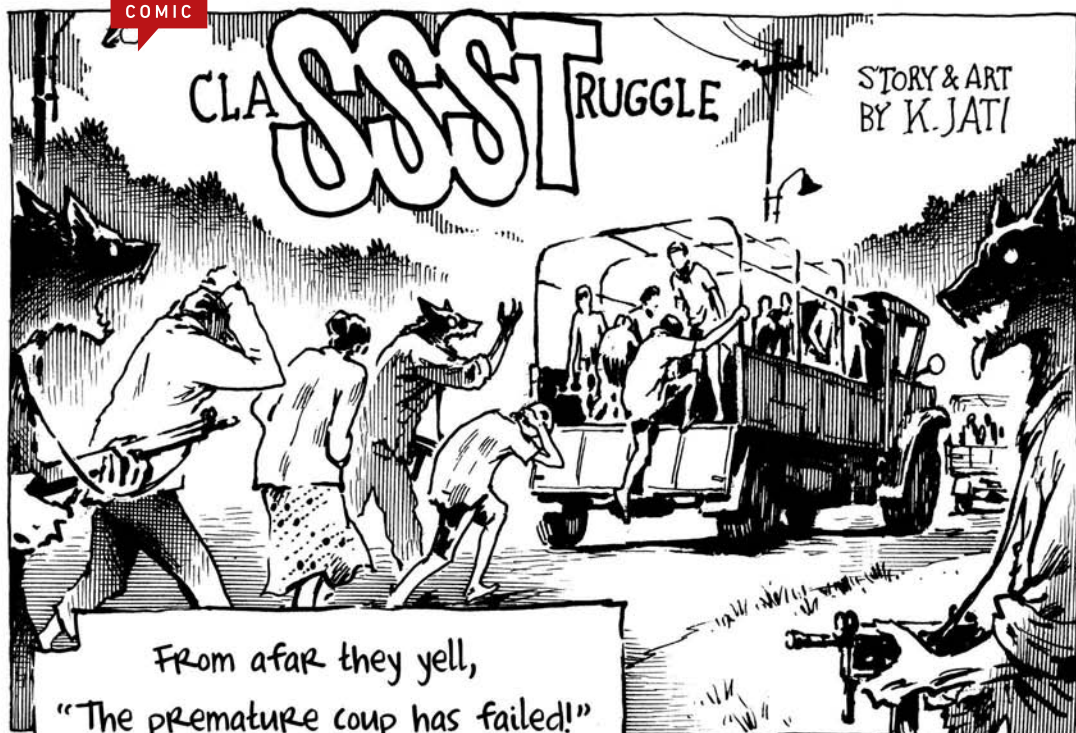
on our family. One day, my scholarship was withdrawn for no clear reason. I was called in front of the class with the blackboard behind me and the teacher told me why my scholarship was withdrawn, "Because you are a daughter of a PKI." Years after, I was still sad every time I heard or read the word "scholarship". "Ninuk is a child of a PKI!" I often heard my schoolmates mocked me every time they passed my home.

A few years after, my sister passed an exam to enter a prestigious state high school. My mother was so excited that she held a special party to celebrate. She made *bancakan* (cone-shaped rice with various dishes). Unfortunately, a letter came to our house a few days later. The letter stated that despite the result of the exam, my sister could not enter the state high school, because my father was a former political-prisoner. My father just said, "Never mind, just forget it!"

>> Translated by **RICARDO SINAGA**
Reviewed by **MARY FARROW**

- 1 Mas means brother, a term of address for Javanese men.
- 2 Pakde = Uncles (older than your parents).
- 3 PKI = The Indonesian Communist Party.
- 4 Pak means father, a form of address for men in Indonesia.
- 5 Eks Tapol = Former Political Prisoner.
- 6 Golkar is the political party of Soeharto.

CLASS STRUGGLE

STORY & ART
BY K. JATI

Our dear teacher and his friends
who have taught us to read and write
have been herded into the truck
and taken away.



Since the Dutch colonial era,
we have not seen so many people
die or lose their freedom...

...for the sake of
a political order
in this country






"This is a Democratic Revolution."

"They are evils who want to create
a state within a state."




"Those who stray away from
the Republic's visions and
ideals must be destroyed!"
he said.



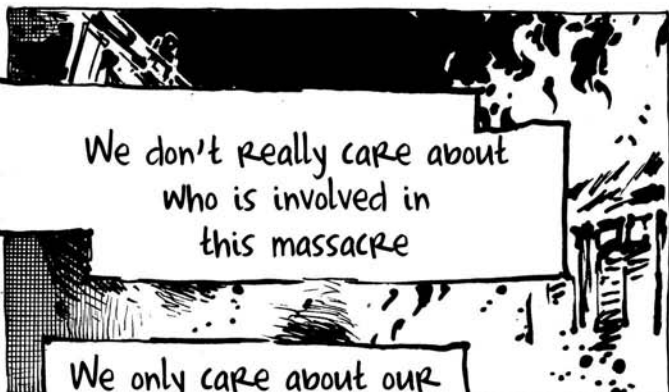


The hell with the wave of
prejudice, accusations,


conflicts and hatred



They talk about
conspiracy theories,
infiltrations &
the cold war.




We don't really care about
who is involved in
this massacre



We only care about our
innocent friends who
have been murdered.
The ones left are now fighting

...by our side



For us, life is a matter of standing up
for our rights

We will struggle until
the day we die

FIN
K. JATI
2015

WHEN THE WORLD WAS DIVIDED

{ DATUK MAJOINDO }

This was a time when the world was divided in two: International Capitalism versus Communism. It was popularly recognised as the Cold War. A clash of power, a technological race in the fighting for influence between the United States and their allies against the Soviet Union and their satellite states.

Between those two superpowers, a new force emerged: Egypt, India, China, Indonesia, and other post-colonial countries that were called the third world countries.

The two main forces involved in the Cold War surely felt apprehensive by the decisions of several leaders of the so-called third world countries. Various actions to destroy these leaders were conducted by the West, such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptian President who succeeded in unifying the Arab world with the formation of the United Arab Republic. In the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, a respected leader who was also a supporter for the third world power was murdered by a US intelligence operation. Among those third world leaders, Indonesia's President Soekarno was the most difficult one to get rid of. They conducted various operations to eliminate him including using their local spies who were committed to murdering the President. Finally, a CIA master who was previously stationed in Vietnam was summoned to serve as the US ambassador in Jakarta to turn Indonesia from pink into green.

Among those
third world leaders,
Indonesia's President
Soekarno was the
most difficult one
to get rid of ”

The Indonesian national situation was identified as “Pink” at that time and this was indeed frightening for the *Nekolim* (Sukarno's term for Neo Colonialist-Imperialist). Sukarno and his supporters almost succeeded in drawing the line between national friends and foes. Later on, Marshall Green was called to serve as the US ambassador in Jakarta.

Among many allies of America, the United Kingdom was the most furious one, angered by Indonesian actions under the leadership of Sukarno (Bung Karno). He claimed that Malaysia was an imperialist stooge for the British and he declared a war against Malaysia.

But the axis of Peking, Hanoi and Jakarta also made the Soviet Union panic. The Soviet Union was unhappy when Soekarno moved closer to Peking since the Soviet Union and China were in a dispute that led to battles over territories between those two communist states.

WITNESS OR PERPETRATOR

I was a member of People's Youth when the October 1965 incident occurred. As Sukarno's supporters at the time of the PRRI/Permesta rebellion¹, we suffered enormous cruelty and inhuman treatment from the rebels. In Nagari Situjuh (now, Western Sumatera), around 150 members and sympathisers of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) were captured, put into a school building and were burned alive. Those who ran were shot dead. After the Indonesian National Armed Forces claimed that they succeeded in putting down the rebellion, tension was still quite high. As an indigenous Chief and also a member of People's Youth, I witnessed the unhealthy developments and decided to request a transfer from the organisation to somewhere else. My request was granted and I moved to Medan in the year of 1960.

¹ This rebellion was caused by the anger of ethnic groups in Sulawesi and central Sumatra, as they felt that government policies were deteriorating their local economies.

The North Sumatera Great Region was not fully free from the communist party's defects as feudalism and nepotism were applied. The cadres in the regions for instance had many problem people to promote into the central leadership positions. Since I joined in Northern Sumatera in 1960, I was only trusted to serve in the security unit because of my martial arts ability.

THE FIRST OF OCTOBER 1965: THE NIGHTMARE

That morning, the party's Northern Sumatra office located exactly in front of the Medan Heroes' Cemetery ran its activities as usual, but *Harian Rakyat* or The People's Daily (the PKI's official newspaper) did not arrive from Jakarta. The last national news on October 2, 1965 reported that there was a murder of six Generals by the movement called the Revolutionary Council. That was the only formal information we had until several party delegations came with bad news. Meanwhile the situation in Medan turned to become more frightening with the appearance of *Kesatuan Aksi Ganyang G30S PKI* or the United Action to Exterminate the 30 September Movement/the Communist Party of Indonesia which was conducted by the military.

The first victim among us was our Comrade Zakir Sobo, the Second Secretary of the PKI of the Medan Branch. He died by being brutally stabbed with bamboo spears. His fate was terrible but many others also met horrible ends as they were murdered and dumped in unknown places. We could at least hold a party ceremony for Bung Zakir's corpse. The situation turned even worse and the long awaited instruction from the organisation to fight back did not come at all. We were all waiting for Bung Karno's speech. Everything was not clear at that time and we were all waiting for instructions of what to do. What was certain was that The Pancasila Youth, formed under the instruction of General A.H. Nasution, acted in more brutal ways and was also supported by the military.

On October 14, 1965, all party offices were occupied by the military and the houses of the PKI leaders were burnt. On October 10, I still spent the night in the Northern Sumatra office with several comrades including Comrade Ibrahim from the party's Northern Aceh Regency Committee. We were discussing what had actually happened. From our discussion, I concluded that the PKI had no intention to rebel at all.

Finally, on October 16, 1965, I received an order to take several Indonesian-Chinese comrades away from Medan since all the leaders had moved out of town and the others were already captured. The brutal murders and robberies in Pajak Ikan Medan area were beyond imagination. The Indonesian-Chinese comrades who previously worked as fish sellers were all massacred by the Pemuda Pancasila. A similar fate happened to the shop owners who were members of Baperki². Those people were murdered and their shops were robbed.

For several following months, I moved around and hid in my comrades' houses until all of them were captured. From then on I moved to a family's house in the outskirts, sometimes living as a farm worker or a pedicab driver in suburban areas. The situation in Medan became extremely dangerous when Sarwo Edi served as the Commander in Chief for Bukit Barisan Region Military Command. Various issues to provoke the murders of the PKI members were spread. For example there was a rumour that a soldier was killed by a member of the PKI and therefore the operation to take revenge on this incident was conducted.

Around that time, I was caught and beaten down by the masses, but the wound in my chest saved me because they thought I was already dead and the terrified masses left me alone. Honestly, I do not know who helped me that time, but later that night someone carried me to a pedicab and took me to a hospital.

ADVENTURE IN ACEH'S JUNGLE

A world was divided. Nobody wanted to acknowledge their family members who were involved in the PKI, even though they had the same parents. I was only 26 years old then and I did not have much hope but to survive from the death that had been haunting me. The last information I acquired then was that thousands of my comrades were jailed and/or murdered. But they kept saying, "Wait for Bung Karno's speech." Honestly, I could not rely on a false hope any longer. All the party leaders had given up and Chairman Aidit was shot dead. Almost all of my close friends were gone and all the big rivers were full with corpses.

² Baperki is the Indonesian Chinese organisation that was labeled communist.

Finally a relative was willing to take me to Aceh. He was a village chief and was well respected. In Aceh, there were no more talks related to the PKI since all of the PKI members had been murdered and no one there had an ID card marked with ET code (Ex-Tapol or ex political prisoner). Aceh was considered cleaned up from the PKI even though several of its sympathisers remained.

The brutal murders and robberies in Pajak Ikan Medan area were beyond imagination.

The Indonesian-Chinese comrades who previously worked as fish sellers were all massacred by the Pemuda Pancasila.

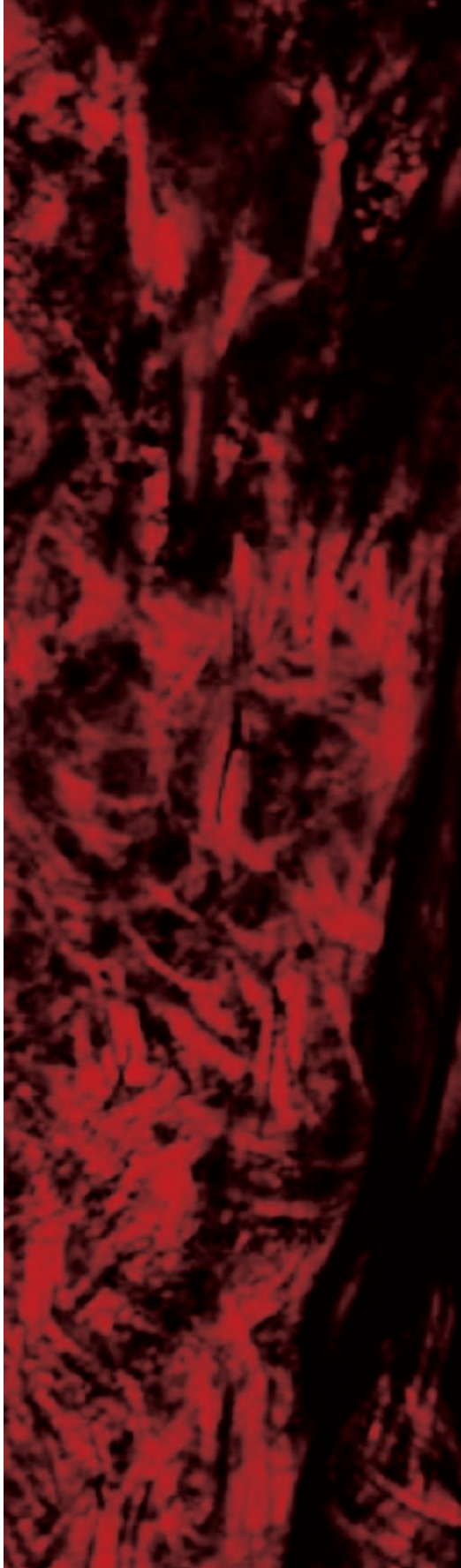
My cousin was a businessman who made forest products such as processing wood and gathering resin and rattan for the main market in Medan. He asked me to help him with administrative work since he himself was only able to read and write in Arabic. I was located in that village at the edge of a forest and I had to acquire forest products from the workers there. Lumberjacks processed the logs and used water buffaloes to pull the logs to the river banks. Logs were made into rafts and were floated to the board refinery where all the logs are processed into materials.

Fear was a very cruel ghost and I suffered much from trauma. Later on I quit my job and started to work as a lumberjack in a forest. I learned to saw off huge logs since there was no machine to do this at that time. Being able to write triggered suspicion among my fellow workers who happened to be illiterate, so I had to pretend to be uneducated as well. I also learned Acehese and found out that there was a small village at the edge of the forest which became the settlement of remnants of the PKI and the BTI (Barisan Tani Indonesia or the Indonesian Peasant Front).



i was a member of a legal party but became a political fugitive in my own homeland. This writing is only a small part of that experience that I can remember, at least to explain that the PKI was innocent and had no intention of rebelling. Gestok was a neo-liberal political conspiracy to get rid of Bung Karno and turn the pink Indonesia into green.

>> Translated by **LEON KARTASURYA**
Edited by **MARY FARROW**.



THE LOOK OF SILENCE ;

Finding our Humanity in The Face of Genocide

{ DESMOND TUTU AND MARY WALD }

*Documentary filmmaker **Joshua Oppenheimer** has released two courageous films in the last three years. They're courageous not only because they take on the genocide of more than one million Indonesians in 1965 and 1966, a grisly subject that has been swept under the rug for 50 years, but also because the filmmaker dares to believe that anyone would care about the death of a bunch of "communists" halfway around the world before many of us were even born.*



Neither film is easy to watch.

The first, "**THE ACT OF KILLING**," follows the leaders of the most powerful state-sponsored death squad in Sumatra as they re-enact, Hollywood style, torturing and butchering thousands of "suspected communists," including writers, intellectuals, union members and ethnic Chinese. The second film, "**THE LOOK OF SILENCE**," recently released in the **US**, follows Adi Rukun, whose brother was tortured and killed by the death squads, as he tracks down and attempts to confront the men responsible.

In both films the perpetrators speak of things that will haunt you long after the story has been told. The executioners openly brag of strangling, torturing, castrating, beheading and more with a chilling lack of remorse and without the slightest hint of apology.

Sadly it is a story that has repeated itself, **Rwanda** and **Kosovo** perhaps being the two that come most easily to mind. A slower version of the same story has been playing out in **Sudan** for decades, leaving more than two and a half million dead. **Indonesia** and **Sudan** are slightly different stories, in that the murderers have remained in power, both on a national level and in the affected villages. So those who survive suffer twice, once in the brutal loss of loved ones, and after, having to live with the perpetrators as powerful neighbors, knowing that if crossed they could come again, with impunity.

The artists and storytellers can skillfully put the facts of brutality in a palatable form. There is no way around the turning of one's stomach at hearing of a man slicing off another man's penis and leaving him to bleed to death, or listening to someone describe burning one of their fellow humans alive.



*Thank God we are not numb.
When we are filled with revulsion,
we are also inspired and galvanized,
to ask questions, to seek truth, to act*

where we can. And while the road to stopping such mass insanity in our world will be a long one, asking the questions will put our feet on that road. Hopefully our questions will include how deeply our own countries were involved in, supported, or benefited politically or financially from these vile acts.

Genocides and mass killings such as those we have seen in **Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and East Timor** do not spring from the ground. They are engineered. At the least someone is profiting from selling the weapons that are used to hack each other up. At the worst there are foreign governments behind the scenes, providing the arms, equipment and sometimes training, protecting the perpetrators from justice, and receiving political capital or access to natural resources in return.

Our revulsion should also serve as a needed reminder that while we have dazzled ourselves with technological advances, networked ourselves with instantaneous digital communication across the globe, we have no cause for arrogance. The fact that few in the West are even aware of what occurred in Indonesia so are unable to learn from it, and the fact that genocide is going on under our noses in Sudan, should be sobering reminders that our technological achievements have not been matched by an equal moral advance. Our technological intelligence may be towering. But our moral stature is dwarfish in comparison. We cannot preen too much over developing facial recognition technology or artificial intelligence when children are being raped and murdered under our noses while we stare into our computer screens.

Fortunately, while we may have an extraordinary capacity for evil, we also have an extraordinary capacity for good. In nearly all accounts of genocide we have found wonderful instances of good, and memorable examples of courage, magnanimity and caring. For every Hitler, there will be Schindlers. And there will be storytellers and filmmakers to remind us that we have a choice, to recognize and act on our shared humanity, or to look away.

Ultimately, those responsible for atrocities such as the Indonesia genocide come a cropper. If justice is not served in their lifetimes, it will be served by history. **Hitler, Idi Amin, Pinochet** and their like are remembered as butchers. In the end, the world honors the good. Our challenge today is to harness the good in ourselves, to be more humane, more gentle, more caring, to treat each being in our world as someone of infinite worth.

As technology gives us access to the far reaches of the globe, we must see that infinite worth in a man or woman in Sumatra who now has to live next to the man who tortured and killed their loved one, as we also strive to see it in our neighbor at home.

When we use atrocity to inspire us to act, to ask the right questions, to reach across the globe and try to stop someone from being killed or suffering, our world will become a more livable one. Only then will we be able to hope to turn back the tide on genocide.

* This article is first published on TheCommunity.com



DESMOND TUTU

Bishops from South Africa ,
recipient of the Nobel Peace
Prize in 1984

MARY WALD

Founder Community.com

in the women's axiom camp

>> by **MANUSIA PERAHU**

dew,

Radiating into the dark sidelines without
lighten axis, bewildering, hitting the sharp
fog, as if it were a stiletto knife, stabbed
into a conscience, melting into a deep
desire, even though grandma had not
finished learning to dream and to walk.

in the women's axiom camp

grandma was a parched field-they planted
seeds, fertilised love full of dedication,
spelled script strands, slowly wave
manifestation in heart.

*"we are the silent season, grandma,
ushering you to a palace you built
decades ago"*

grandma was a house full of smoke they
puffed asthma, weaved cough from throat,
they went out immediately, carrying
grandma from a smoke trapped.
Still, they got weakened before twilight
chopped off the evening.

in the women's axiom camp,
equality and justice are not divided
by the river they looked for an
expression on grandma's face while
riding a pamphlet folded by paper
plane, flowing together with grandma
and her daughters, without hissing
wind and a swinging song they came
for the grandma's birthday Dark night
they cleated bloodproof bodies in this
place, where dark night covered eyes
they passed away they teare as the
deceased in plasa they cleated the
bodies along the edge of Ciliwung
River quite far, heard echos of
screams hitting the building,
Monas¹ and Pancasila²

*"Never did we murder and cut
all general's genitals"*

the darker the night, the more it triggered infamy
headlessly, genitacally the grieved as victims of fury
in grandma's house Who came up with no passage
stories? who spread the poignant to the well last year?
when all altered to be blind, when clouds shaded women
when the moon appeared with no winks "Emerged the
dazing accusation none of us ever did" they became
rocks for the moss, mud in thier rights desire for evil
riding horses and now, decayed the grandma's calendar
eradicated the justice.

>> Translated by **SHINTA MIRANDA** and **ISSAIAH FANNY ALAM**

1 Monas: A national museum decorated with 35 kg gold on top.
2 Pancasila: The philosophical basis of Indonesia

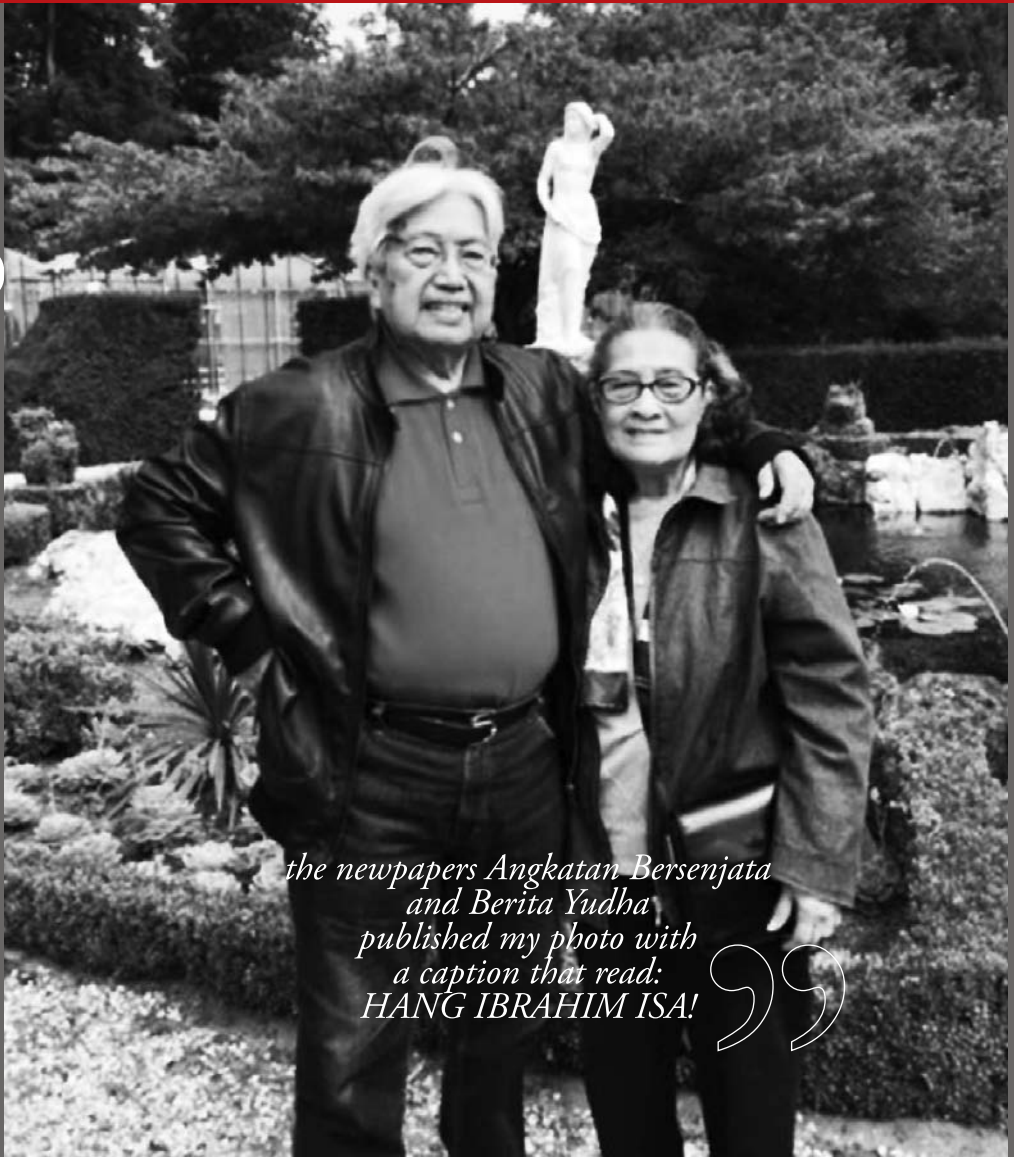
EXILED FROM MY HOMELAND

{ IBRAHIM ISA }

BHINNEKA / SEPTEMBER 2015

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Exiled from My Homeland



Ibrahim Isa & istri di Soestdik - Belanda

The mention of the 1965 genocide brings my mind to what happened 50 years ago, when our passports were declared invalid by the authorities in Jakarta (in January 1966). Because, we were accused of being complicit in the murder of the Generals on 1 October 1965 as well as having planned a rebellion. In the beginning of 1966, the newspapers *Angkatan Bersenjata* and *Berita Yudha* published my photo with a caption that read: "HANG IBRAHIM ISA!" But why?

IN THE BEGINNING ...

Before the murder of the generals known as Gestok, I was the representative of Indonesia at the Permanent Secretariat AAPSO (Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization) in Cairo, Egypt since 1960. The AAPSO was founded in 1957 after the first Asian-African Conference in Cairo, Egypt.

In October 1965, I was in Jakarta and witnessed the political turbulence spreading all over the country. At that time, there was an invitation to attend the Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Havana. I believed that the Indonesian government would not send the delegation that I led, because many of the members were identified as lefties, and indeed, several had been captured, murdered or simply disappeared.

In the beginning of December 1965, I told the central committee of the conference that we might not be able to send anyone to Havana because of the upheaval in Indonesia. However, one of the committee members said: "Why don't you just come to represent Indonesia?". I replied: "Yes, but I do not want to go on my own." Incidentally, several of my friends were overseas then, so I asked them to attend the conference as well. In the end, there were eight people to represent Indonesia in Havana.

TWO DELEGATIONS


In Havana, suddenly came another Indonesian delegation, led by the Brigadier Latif Hendraningrat. I recognised that many of the people in the delegation were from the military. I explained to the committee members that that delegation was not the "real" delegation of the people, but the military delegation.

Latif was actually a good friend of mine. When I met Latif, I asked him what he would talk about in the conference. He answered: "I am pro-Sukarno, I am going to talk about anti-imperialism." I knew that he lied. Therefore I told him that the conference participants were not interested in anti-imperialism in Indonesia. They had found out that there was a political upheaval in Jakarta and they wanted to know how President Sukarno was. However, he refused to talk about this issue and when I said that I would, Latif insisted that I must not speak. Because no agreement was reached, we discussed this with the committee members. The Committee decided to accept the delegation led by me.


Finally, as the Chairman of the Indonesian delegation at the Conference, I gave a speech in front of more than 1000 people consisting of representatives from different countries as well as international journalists. I revealed what really happened in Indonesia, namely the rising military rule under Soeharto, that started to undermine the governance of President Sukarno.

Of course, the high officials in Jakarta, who were then predominantly Soeharto's allies, were furious. The newspapers condemned us and soon after, our passports were revoked without due process. It was really bitter for all of us. In the beginning of January 1966, in the middle of an important international conference in Havana, I received the sad news.

However, later on there was a bit of a consolation for us, when suddenly President Fidel Castro visited the Indonesian delegation, in our room at the Hotel Habana Libre. He came early in the morning with his body-guard. We just got up then and many of us did not even have shower yet before meeting the President! We did not expect this at all. This visit was an important political statement of President Castro to show that Cuba was on our side. Castro provided us with Cuban passports, after finding out that our passports had been revoked by the military regime in Jakarta.



IBRAHIM ISA,
has written three books
published in Jakarta
(*Suara Seorang Eksil*,
Bui Tanpa Jerajak Besi and
Kabar dari Seberang).



Do I regret attending the conference in Havana? Not at all. If we believe in our idealism, we should definitely be ready for the risks as well. So, I never regret it at all.

About a year later, I moved to Beijing and worked at the Asian-African Research Organisation there. We published the weekly Suara Rakyat Indonesia and OISRAA Bulletin in English. These publications provided information on political development in Indonesia, critising the New Order regime. In the late 1986, I moved to the Netherlands as a political asylum seeker, and I finally got my Dutch passport. Together with other comrades, I established the Asian Studies Foundation.

Translated by **SOE TJEN MARCHING**

Truth of 1965: Disturbing Peace?

{ SOE TJEN MARCHING }

”

Not all truth is good,” says Adi Zulkadry, one of the mass murderers featured in Joshua Oppenheimer’s documentary film The Act of Killing.

“There is a bad truth, that is, the truth that brings up old wounds. If they want to draw attention to old wounds again, this will rekindle war,” Adi says.

Coordinators and supporters of the International People's Tribunal 1965 face similar reactions, through comments such as *"Why are you waking up sleeping lions? Do you want to stir up problems? Do you want to disturb the peace?"*

The IPT 1965 is a tribunal that sees judges produce verdicts based on evidence presented, to unveil the truth and demand justice for the victims of the 1965 anti-communist purges. The verdicts will not be legally binding, but they will serve to show that Indonesian governments have thus far failed to take appropriate legal action on behalf of the victims.

However, many remain reluctant to hear the truth, especially as the truth is likely to anger several powerful parties. If the cost is this high, why bother, they say.

Indeed, revealing the truth does not always lead to immediate reconciliation and peace, and considering the magnitude of the crimes of some of these powerful individuals and groups, that is unlikely to happen in this case. It is easy for the powerful to incite trouble, especially when they can exert influence in the media and have cronies placed in strategic positions. So the calculative strategy of avoiding risks, consciously or unconsciously, has led many people to believe that keeping quiet about human rights violations conducted by the powerful is an acceptable way of maintaining the peace in society.

Peace and reconciliation indeed have a great ring to them — how could anyone oppose them? Surely only troublemakers? The problem is, however, that these two words do not mean anything without truth. Can we speak of true peace and reconciliation when victims are still oppressed? What is the point of peace and reconciliation if disadvantaged groups continue to suffer?

Peace that exists at the cost of sustaining injustice (in this case the stigma of the victims and their families), is merely a peace for those in power: a partial peace, a manipulative one. And one of the dangers is that this situation will nurture the idea that peace can only happen if we please the people in power and if we appease them so they would not show their anger. In short, this would be a peace based on threats and fear.

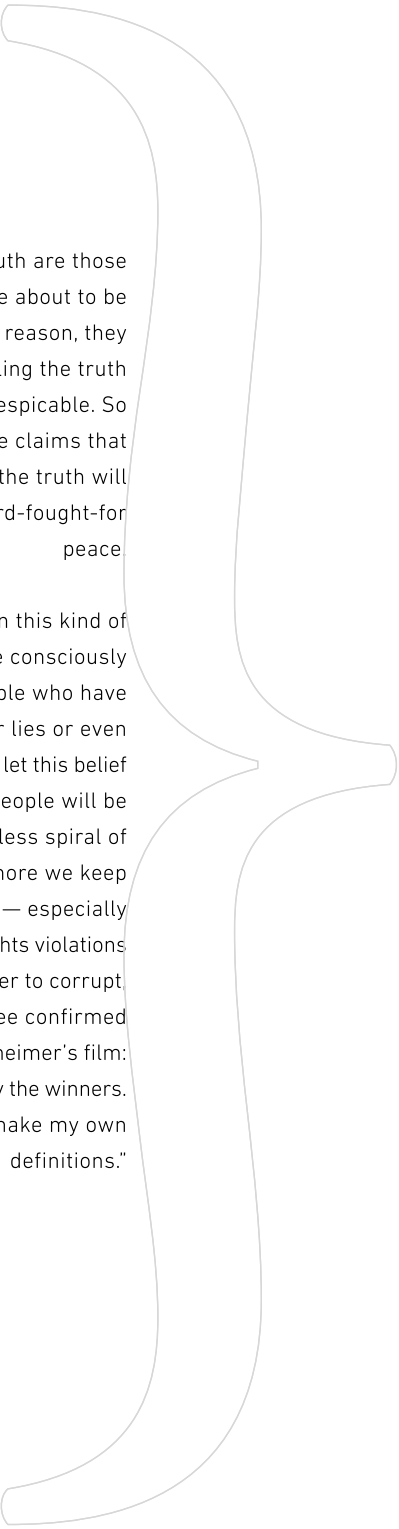
The revelation of truth, especially when it is related to exposing decades-long official deceit, raises the spectre of conflict, because the authorities will create a propaganda campaign to deny the painful facts. In such a situation, who is responsible for stirring up trouble? Who disturbs the peace? Definitely not the truth itself. Also not the victims. It is the anger of the people in power whose lies are about to be revealed that is to blame.

Remember also that Suharto used to call anyone who dared to criticize him a traitor to the nation and a danger to stability – as if opposing Suharto meant betraying the entire country.

”

Nelson Mandela was considered a terrorist when he started his anti apartheid movement in South Africa. Even the most famous campaigner for non-violent resistance, Mahatma Gandhi, had been branded as a troublemaker by colonial British authorities in India. Winston Churchill, who is considered as one of the greatest British heroes of all time, said it was “alarming and nauseating” to see Gandhi, whom he described as “a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal Palace.”

Gandhi was thus portrayed as merely provocative, an embarrassing person, a lower type of human being — and not as the peaceful and iconic human rights proponent we see today. Remember also that Suharto used to call anyone who dared to criticize him a traitor to the nation and a danger to stability – as if opposing Suharto meant betraying the entire country.



The enemies of the truth are those whose manipulations are about to be disclosed, and for this reason, they see any attempt at revealing the truth as something despicable. So be cautious when anyone claims that attempts at unveiling the truth will merely endanger hard-fought-for peace.

The more we believe in this kind of statement, the more we consciously collaborate with the people who have gained greatly from their lies or even their crimes. The more we let this belief circulate, the more people will be dragged into an endless spiral of manipulation. And the more we keep quiet about manipulation — especially if this relates to human rights violations — the more we allow power to corrupt and the more we will see confirmed what Adi claims in Oppenheimer's film: "War crimes are defined by the winners. I am the winner, so I make my own definitions."

SOE TJEN MARCHING, the British coordinator of IPT 1965, is currently working on a book chronicling the lives of victims from the 1965 anti-communist purge.

The article is first published in *The Jakarta Globe*.

Indonesian Children; **MASS VIOLENCE CONSERVERS?**

{ **GALANG BAGUS SATRIA** }

Illustration from *Produk Propaganda* comic by Aji Prasetyo



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Indonesian Children;
Mass Violence Conserver?

BHINNEKA / SEPTEMBER 2015

Looking back on my school days, I was taught that the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) had masterminded the murders of the “heroes of the Indonesian Revolution.” The school lessons unfailingly (at least in my case) evoked nationalist sentiments, i.e. there were enemies of the state who had the nerve to work against the country’s unity. Now, when considering other historical accounts on the subject, this view is no longer tenable. I am reminded of the remark by von Ranke who said he had been riled to listen to a story about the misfortune of one nobleman and how he had been affected by an event that occurred in the past.¹ Yet in the end it was us and von Ranke who were put to shame for buying into historical propaganda which proved to have stirred our hearts greater than the romances of the Pané brothers.

Any discourse on the 1965 genocide and the subsequent stigmatisation of many of the victims invariably leads back to the historical context behind the 30 September incident. When discussing the government's stance on the issue, we need to take a closer look at the way 1 October 1965 is officially portrayed. One of the valid sources are the history text books used in schools.²

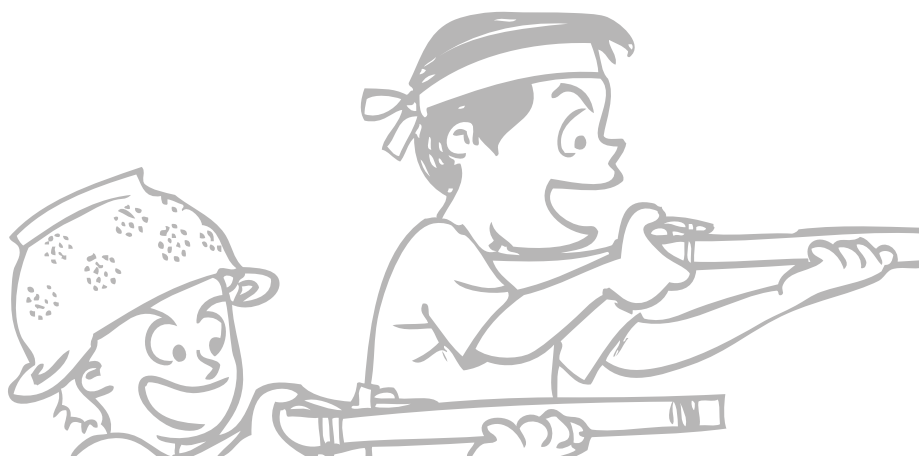
There is little doubt that the government has a say in how history is presented in our school text books. For instance, the designation for the '65 event is fixed: the suffix PKI is mandatory when mentioning the 30 September incident (hence the G30S/PKI). The basis for this comprises official government publications such as: Indonesian National History or documents released by the Secretary of State. Deviation from these guidelines is usually viewed as propagation of Communism and a threat to stability. In short, the government actively seeks to maintain its monopoly on the past through the control of certain media to instill perspectives that lend it political legitimacy.³

How are those perspectives embedded in the standard school text books? In a book by Matroji, the history of the PKI is presented in line with the usual anti-communist discourse that stigmatises the movement. In his chapter on Indonesia's pre-independence nationalist movement, the PKI's role is grossly overlooked in favour of other organisations, such as the PNI, Syarikat Islam, or Indische Partij. Non-PKI organisations - are credited with socio-economic contributions to the pre-independence Indonesian society, but not so with the PKI. One of the reasons for this omission is that the PKI "... in a self-interested act decided to lead a rebellion [against the colonial government]..."⁴

A grade 9 text-book, by the same author, also casts the PKI as an unsavoury force in the nation's post-independence history. The author alleges that prior to 30 September, the PKI launched propaganda to incite people to support its takeover of power, and in another part of the book he praises the role of the army in countermanding the PKI's manoeuvres.⁵ Here the PKI is clearly portrayed as an epidemic or pest that must be exterminated and prevented from recurring.

A number of conclusions can be drawn. First, the narrative on the PKI is presented as a single-stream current that brooks no other interpretation and is ultimately anthropomorphised as being of low morality by debasing the PKI as a character with a rebellious and debased nature. Thus reduced, the history of the PKI becomes the tale of a wayward son of the Motherland who transgresses against morality and in the end reaps what he sows (mass murder). In this understanding, anything connected with the PKI immediately becomes the antithesis of the Indonesian moral identity. The need to defend the purity of the Indonesian identity then necessitates us to overlook and even tolerate the brutality evident in the "cleansing" of the nation from PKI and its supporters.

Second, both the PKI and the army are juxtaposed as villain and hero respectively. The PKI was the "problem" for the state while the army was the "solution." The antithetical relationship between the two is obvious. Moral decadence is represented by the chaos-bringing PKI and the panacea is the Sacred-Pancasila-wielding army. Placing the army as the hero is the state sponsored the notion that it was military heroism that pulled the nation from the brink of the abyss. The narrative also hints at the inevitability of the triumph of order represented in Indonesian folklore as Ratu Adil (the Just King/Queen). The long period of colonialism appears to have its cathartic end in the purge of the PKI. The constructed myth has the air of being a morality tale.



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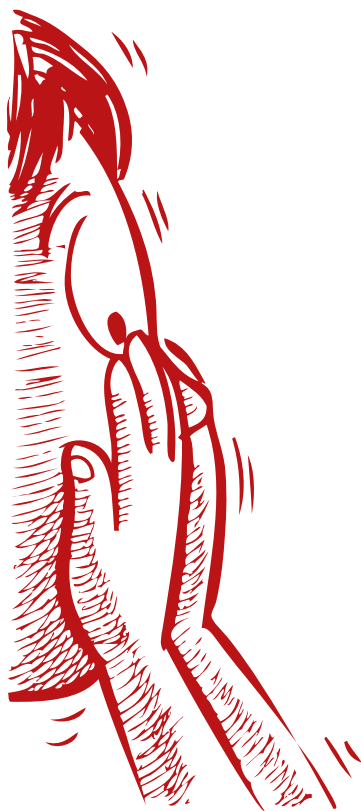
o what does the government try to achieve with the above? There is no single interpretation; however, telltales point to its being an effort to justify the current government's stance on the subject. We are not only talking about textual relations here but also internal textual logic that is conveyed to the public. This explains why information about the mass murder post 30 September has been muted, both in our literature and consciousness. However, the two are entwined: the school text books refuse to identify the purge as genocide, arguing that it was simply the PKI's treachery, thus triggering socio-political unrest. In the introduction to the book entitled *The Year that Never Ends*, the absence of the 1965 genocide in our consciousness is described as the result of collective memory reconstruction.⁶

Our collective memory of the bloody event was moulded by the New Order in various ways: memorial monuments, museums, flag-raising ceremonies, films, and textbooks that claim to commemorate the 30 September incident but deny what happened afterwards. The execution of the seven high-ranking military personnel takes precedence over the brutal slaughter of probably millions of people in the name of the eradication of communism. The Communist genocide is still seen as justifiable and necessary because our collective memory has been tampered with, and is associated with honouring the fallen military "heroes".

To paraphrase Hardiman, the hideous noise the New Order made on the issue was the silence of the perpetrators trying to hide their guilt, lies, and secrets through denial.⁷ This is how the nation's historical narrative is connected with its public. In our case, it shackles all the citizens in one unholy cycle of collective making self-justifications in order that the awful burden can be shared, so that a consensus is developed for excusing the mass murders to the extent that they become a tabooed open secret. The role of the government is to pass on this collective sin to the next generations so that they too, will keep up the silence.



This can be connected to Nietzsche's argument on the excess of monumental reasoning in the past.⁸ Initially, according to Nietzsche, monumental reasoning is required when a contemporary model is not available, hence the need to delve into the past. But its excessive use may result in the pruning of inconvenient historical facts to propagate one single narrative in the present; such as the denial of the 1965-1966 mass murders. The reconstruction of the past has become a means for many Indonesians to ignore the atrocities that befell millions of innocent people.



An excess of state “rituals” and “monuments” to past mistakes have dominated the intellectual horizon of Indonesian children.

This narrative plays upon generalisations, and seeks to standardise, for example, the claim that communism and atheism are one and the same. Excessive monumental history tends to disregard the difference between motive and instigation, so that a monumental effect is achieved. In this, it fails to differentiate between PKI and the instigators of the 30 September incident. The public narrative maintains a single-stream interpretation and representation of the PKI's motives as master conspirator. What happens when we annually attend the half-mast flag ceremony and pay our tribute at the Monument of Heroes of the Revolution is, according to Nietzsche, a form of collective effects on the self, a transmission of historical burden which ensures that every new generation shares in the guilt of its forebears as perpetrators of genocide through repeated historical “education”, distortion of truth through morality steeped in epic heroism and the poetic-heroic rationalisation of the massacres.

Through such monumentalisation, the New Order gained free license to stigmatise the victims and to legitimise violence against them, a license that continues in many ways to the present day. The practice of anti-communist indoctrination was strongest in one government domain: education. The role that the government has played in education is to defend its political authority and manipulation of the single narrative. As such, since the education of the younger generations did not take into account their intellectual needs, its impacts have to be seriously examined. In such a system, children only serve as the government's tools instead of fulfilling their educational needs. An excess of state "rituals" and "monuments" to past mistakes have dominated the intellectual horizon of Indonesian children, making them the potential seeds of violence conservers.

GALANG BAGUS SATRIA

Student at Bakrie University.

Translated by **JUKE CAROLINA**

and **JOHANNES NUGROHO**,

reviewed by **PATRICK HOUTERMAN**

¹ John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35.

² Michael Wood, *Official History in Modern Indonesia: New Order Perceptions and Counterviews* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 6. The government maintained its propaganda through the use of three media: academia, historical sites and school text books.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Matroji, *Sejarah untuk SMP Kelas VIII* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006).

⁵ Matroji, *Sejarah untuk SMP Kelas IX* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006).

⁶ John Roosa, Ayu Ratih, & Hilmar Farid, *Tahun yang tak Pernah Berakhir: Memahami Pengalaman Korban 65-Esai Sejarah Lisan* (Jakarta: Elsam, ISSI, TRuK, 2004), 12.

⁷ F. Budi Hardiman, *Massa, Teror, dan Trauma* (Yogyakarta: penerbit Lamalera, 2011).

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," dalam *Untimely Meditations*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 59.

PROPAGANDA PRODUCT

Aji Prasetyo, 2015

I had a lovely
childhood

Unlike kids
today,



One of our favorite
games was playing war



You're dead!
You got shot!

No way!
I shot you
first!

You're
the one
who supposed
to be dead!

Hey!
For bullets
use clay!
Not pebbles!

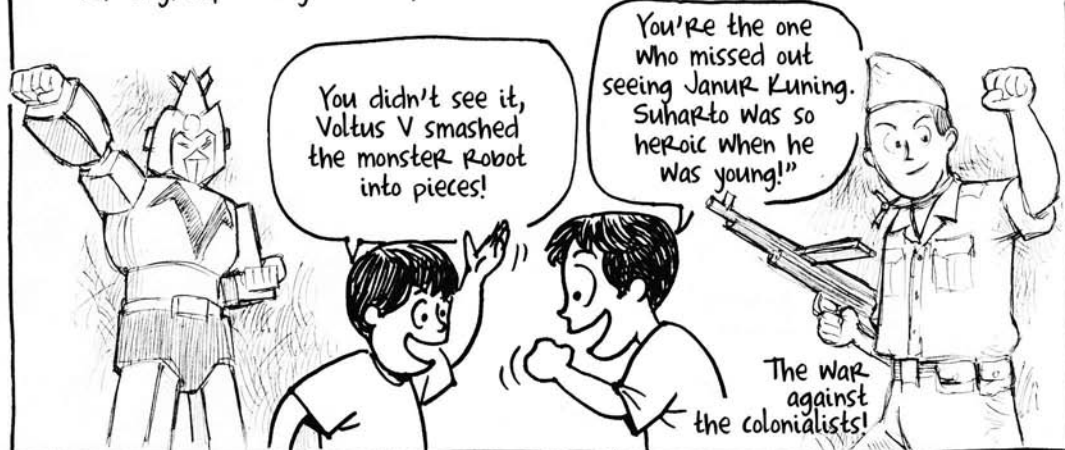
OUCHH...

That was
really the game
for us boys
at that time.

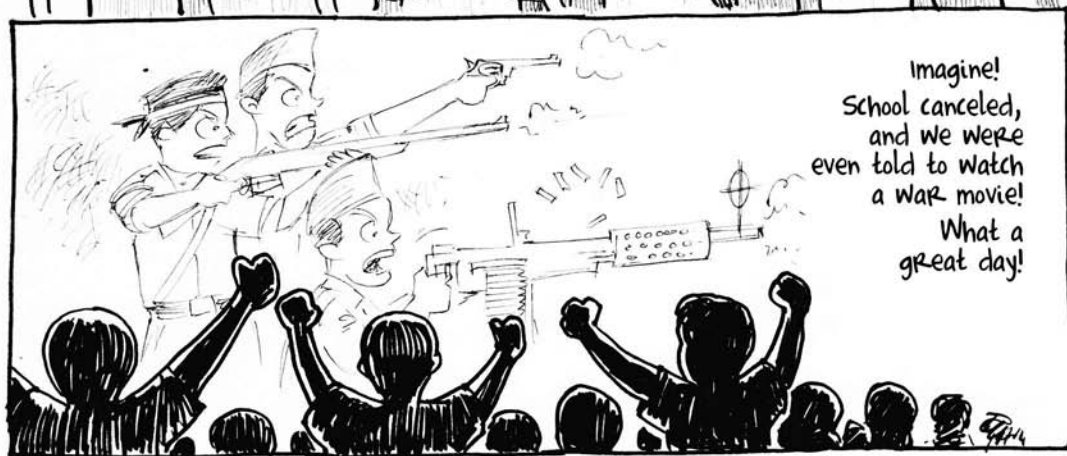


Aji Prasetyo - 15

For a group of boys like us, action movies were the best to watch.



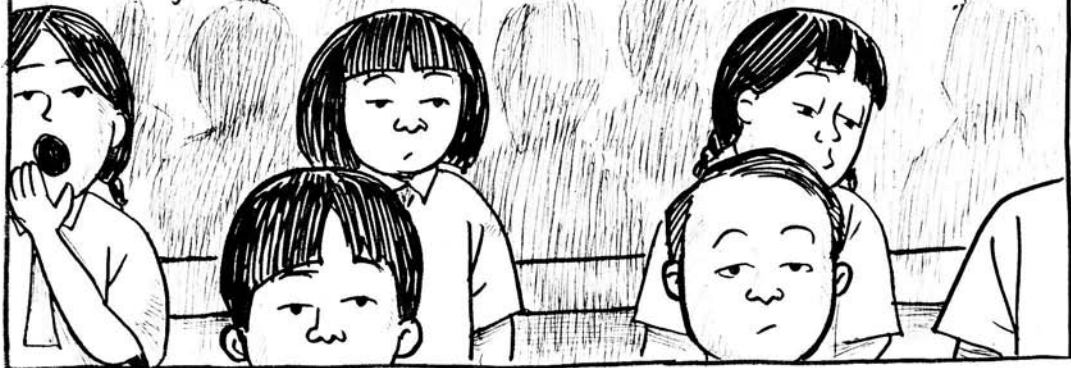
The most fun moment for us was one time a war movie was just released. School was going to be cancelled and the teachers were going to take us to the nearest theater, because the movie was mandatory for all students in every school to watch.



Then, that unforgettable incident happened the incident that shaped our views and ideology.

Yes, this is still about that film.

This film is really weird. It's really gruesome, filled with lengthy dialogues, and it has hardly any battle scene. . . Really boring



And this film is over 4 hours long!



But finally ...

Exciting scenes have just started.

"The General must meet the President immediately!"

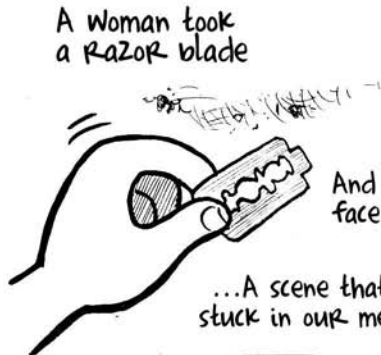
"Fine!"

"Now, General!"





A Woman took
a razor blade



And then sliced the
face of a general!

...A scene that really
stuck in our memories.

The generals
were beaten,
stuck with bayonets, shot,
thrown in a well!



Si. Rudofo 115

We were hysterical, a lot of us were crying, even peeing their pants.



While the torturers, men and women, danced with joy.

Afterwards,
those gruesome scenes
haunted me for days.

I think we were
still too young
to watch them

...but we had to.



The movie was filled
with blood
that made us scream
and pee ourselves

in order to show us
that communism was immoral

the PKI was a bunch
of killers



and GERWANI members
were inhumane,
wild, rebellious women
who enjoyed chopping
people up.

The ideology
must be exterminated,
The followers
must be imprisoned
on remote islands,
their descendants
monitored.

That horror movie
was shown every year
so we would always
remember.





I kept that understanding
until I was an adolescent.

That the PKI were
cruel killers, godless,
enemies of religion.

and GERWANI members
were amoral women,
thirsty for blood.

Time passed

1998, the peak of
the economic crisis.

Tired of a militarist,
corrupt dictatorial regime,
the people forced
President Suharto
to give up his throne.

Since that moment,
the witnesses to history
began to dare
to speak out.

It turned out,
the history of 1965
that I had known all
this time was
very wrong.



Prady - 15

COLD WAR:

Ideological war between the western and eastern bloc,
alias capitalism vs. communism.

American and Russia
never engaged directly
in conflict, but diligently
sponsored civil
wars in Asia.

VIETNAM WAR

KOREAN WAR

The ideological war, f
reighted with business interests,
automatically impacted Indonesia.
How could it?

Because Indonesia is a country
rich with natural resources
but led by a president
who was not willing to sell
off national assets.

Many national leaders in
Asia and Africa were
inspired by Sukarno's idea
of standing on ones own,
free from foreign intervention.

Sukarno's principles were
fully supported by a major
political party that was also
anticapitalist: the

PKI



It's not good.
My business
opportunities
in Asia and
Africa might
be shut down.
Sukarno's going
to ruin me!

He must be removed,
along with the party
of his loyalists."

"...It was America that
taught us to hate communists!"
(statement by a 1965 killer in
the documentary The Look of Silence.)

There were at least seven attempts to kill Sukarno, but they all failed.



America contributed to the effort to overthrow Sukarno. The CIA supplied 15 B-26 bombers to PRRI/Permesta rebels. The rebellion was quashed, and an American pilot was captured.



These events aggravated diplomatic relations with the Western bloc, especially the United States.

And so that incident took place, the September 30th Movement, or

G30S

the abduction and killing of seven of the army's best generals.

G30S was masterminded by the PKI!

As long as it was in power, the Suharto Regime allowed history according to the powerful to be the one and only truth.

Pssst.. Sukarno was very close to the PKI.

Their goal was a coup, to take over!

There are signs Sukarno was involved in G30S!



G30S was a coup

Sukarno was involved in the G30S

the PKI was very close with Sukarno

a coup masterminded by the PKI

Conclusion: Sukarno was involved in a coup against himself!

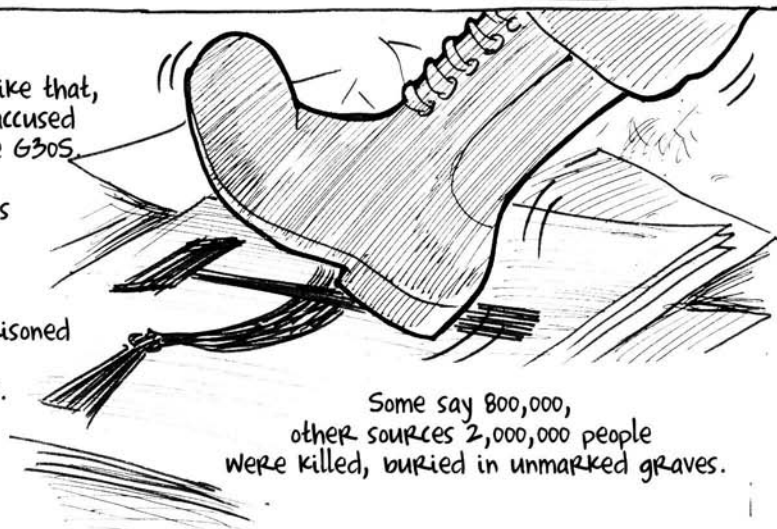


I don't get it.

But it was really like that, when the PKI was accused of being behind the G30S.

The mass media was manipulated.

PKI sympathizers were hunted, imprisoned or killed without any judicial process.

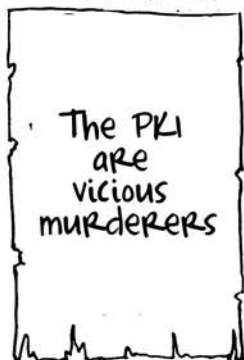


Some say 800,000, other sources 2,000,000 people were killed, buried in unmarked graves.

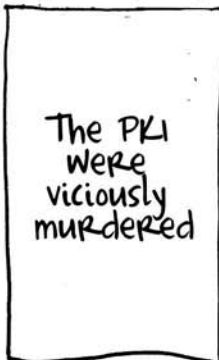
Crazy! Millions of people massacred in an extremely well-organized way, and with no judicial process.

My understanding suddenly changed.

OLD VERSION



NEW VERSION



So, ...
what about the story
about the wild women
who enjoyed slicing
the general's face
and cutting off his
penis?

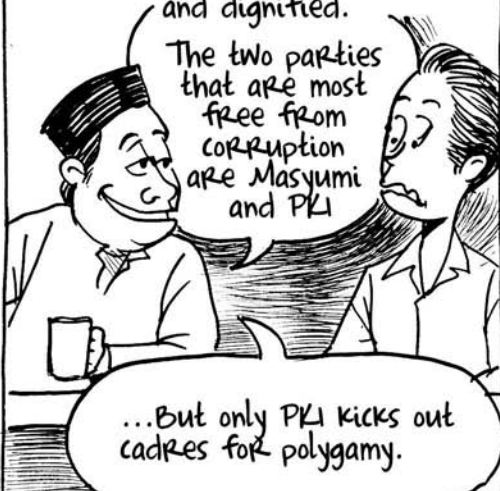


GERWANI (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, or Indonesian Women's Movement) was an organization focused on women's empowerment and the education of the underclass.



They set up free schools and study groups for the poor.

Gerwani fought prostitution, polygamy, forced marriage, and domestic violence. In Gerwani's view women must be productive and dignified.



Gerwani was not created by PKI. But the ideology of the two have many similarities, especially regarding the struggle of the lower classes.

That is what led to
GERWANI being killed
when the PKI
was eradicated.

STRIP!



Many were raped before being
killed, or were forced into
sexual slavery while imprisoned.

Besides GERWANI, there was also
LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat,
or Institute of People's Culture), **BTI**
(Barisan Tani Indonesia, Indonesian
Peasant's Front), and a number of
other organizations whose members
were also exterminated.

They didn't know anything
about the killing
of the generals.



And didn't know why
they had to be killed.

1995, when I first
entered the BRAWIJAYA
Museum in Malang,
East Java.

WHAT IS
THIS?



Sign: Stone used
to fatally destroy
the skull of
a leader of the PKI.
A photo of his corpse
is this way.



Bleeaghhhh!

What kind of
nation is this?

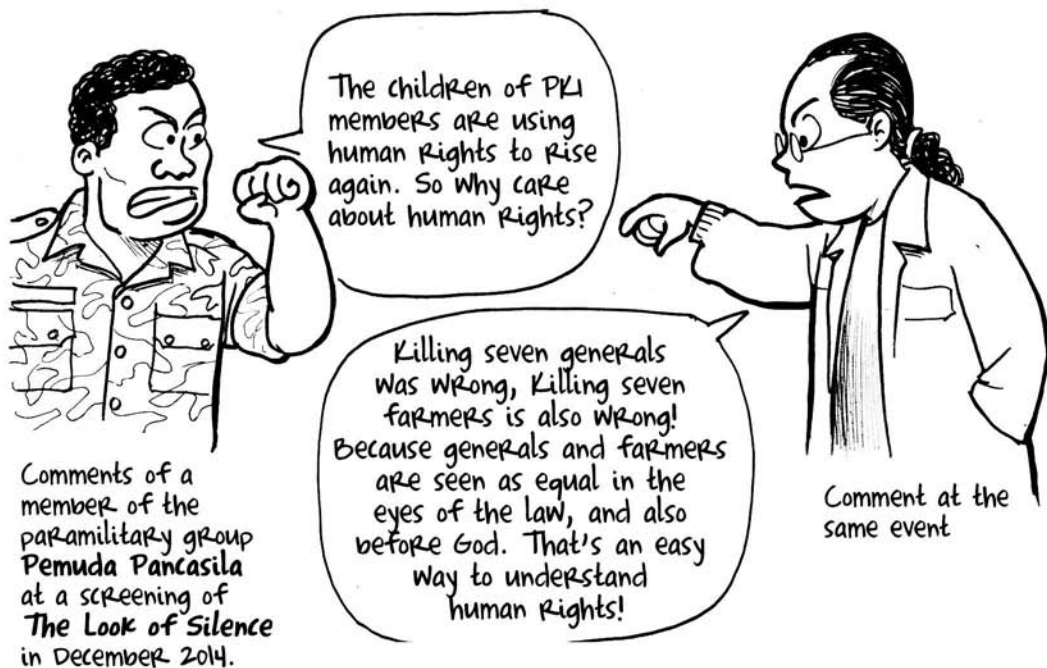


It's awful, isn't it?
Even sadistic and
horrifying things
can become boastful
displays.

For more than 30 years we were indoctrinated that communists were atheists who deserved to be killed as cruelly as possible. The doctrine was firmly lodged in our brains. So that if we're labeled as seeds of a new communism, that's hard for us.



1 May 2015, Dean of the Faculty of Administration of Brawijaya University in Malang cancelled a student event without a clear reason. It seemed that they didn't like student became interested in the problems of the underclass. Seventeen years after the collapse of the Suharto Regime, its doctrine was preserved by campus bureaucrats.

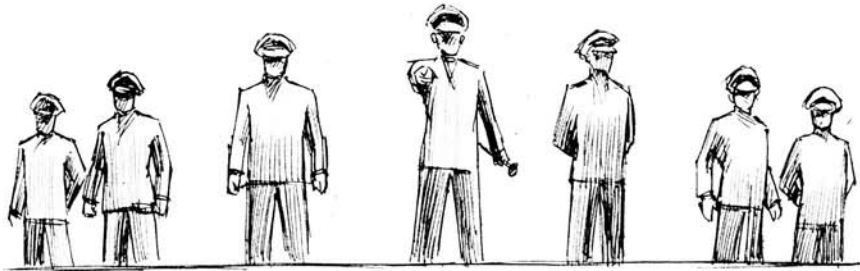


If Haji Misbach was a PKI leader
who also respected the values of Islam,
then how can PKI still be identified as atheist?

If the results of the autopsy
of the bodies of generals didn't show
signs of torture, why were we forced
to watch that horrifying movie?

Ever since we were small we were fed lies
and now we get the truth.

Oh, designers of propaganda,



You have already made a monument
of the seven officers who became victims.

Why are you hiding the millions of other victims?

You owe us the truth.
Let us learn from this black history.

So that we can avoid such a tragedy again.

Ag. Prachya-15

WHEN LITERATURE UNVEILS HISTORY

{ YOSE RIZAL TRIARTO }

The 1965 tragedy in Indonesia is a never ending story. Its controversies, memories and inflictions have become interesting topics to be used as backgrounds for a story - including novels.

From the tragedy, a writer can reconstruct, moreover reinterpret facts from the past. This process will open the eyes of the readers and unveil the forbidden truth hidden by the government.



LASMI: CARRYING THE BURDEN OF HER CHOICE

Lasmi (2009) - a novel by **Nusya Kuswantin**, narrates the life of Lasmi, a 1965 victim. She was accused of becoming a member of Gerwani. This novel also unveils the forbidden truth from the fragment of the Indonesian history in 1965. The sorrow of Lasmi (the main character of this novel) can raise the reader's awareness of the dark side of Indonesian history.

Lasmi was born and grew up in a village in Malang (East Java). However, she is very intelligent and progressive. As a daughter of a reputable family, she has a dream to help the villagers especially in relation to education. With her husband, Sutikno, a school teacher, they build a school for children and adults. The only problem for her is paying the teachers.

One day, she meets Mbak Sum who suggests that she improve her school by joining Melati Foundation. As a consequence of this, Lasmi is also registered as a member of Gerwani. Shortly after, she is elected as a chairperson of Gerwani in her village.

Her position becomes her curse after the 1965 incident in Jakarta. With Sutikno and their son, Gong, they have to run away from their village, hiding themselves from other villages to save their lives. Unfortunately this is the end of her life and the beginning of Gong's suffering.

Several Indonesian writers have used the 1965 tragedy as the setting of their novels. But most of them do not offer a new perspective of history. In many of these novels, the PKI also usually become the accused. In Nusya Kuswantin, Lasmi becomes the victim but there is no new technique in this novel. The plot is rather flat, without complexity and the dialogues are often too formal and dry.

However, this novel does not fail at all. The writer successfully develops the character of Lasmi. At the end of the story, the writer emphasises the message that Lasmi's choice to be executed in public is the embodiment of responsibility as well as her protest. It raises the reader's awareness about the brutality of the 1965 genocide in Indonesia.

LUBANG BUAYA AND KALATIDHA, UNVEILING THE DARK SIDE OF INDONESIAN HISTORY

In the foreword of the novel *Lubang Buaya* (2003), the author Saskia writes that many contemporary historians state that all history is fiction. "No fact at all, only the discourse that is always changing and affected by the power." If history is fiction, can we thus conclude that fiction also means history? Well, I do not want to discuss about the egg and the chicken dilemma, which came first. However, I believe that good literature always records and reflects the spirit of the current society. The writer must represent the society as accurately as possible and record their ideas and feelings.

Indeed, Wieringa acknowledges that the novel *Lubang Buaya* is inspired by her research in 1980 about the violence experienced by members of Gerwani. The result of her research has been published in her book, *Penghancuran Gerakan Wanita di Indonesia* (1999). Therefore, we can find similarities between fragments in the novel and Yanti's testimony in the historical book *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi '65* (SPKT 65).

One amazing similarity is between the fragments of *Kalatidha* by Seno Gumira Ajidarma (2007) and Darmi's testimony in SPKT 65. In Seno's novel, a girl witnesses her house being burnt and all her family killed, including her twin sister, because her father is accused as a sympathiser of the Communist Party. She becomes mentally ill because she cannot accept and also cannot understand what has happened.

In SPKT 1965, Darmi, a dancer in President Soekarno's Palace, witnessed not only her husband and both of her parents in law killed and her house burnt, she also experienced brutal psychological persecution. She was a member of Gerwani and her husband was a member of the Communist Party. Because of these reasons, she was stripped naked and paraded by the anti-communist mob in her village in Bali. She was also forced to do striptease dance in the soldiers' barracks.

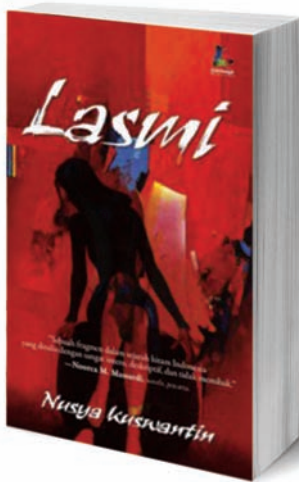
In 30 years during Soeharto's dictatorship, every time she heard the Balinese gamelan (traditional musical instruments), Darmi experienced a horrible trauma. She was aware that dancing was her calling and the sound of gamelan was a call for her to dance. But at the same time, the sound of gamelan revived the memories of her traumatic experience, anger and hatred. Saskia and Seno show us that we can use literature as a strategy to unveil the political scandal in Indonesia, including the 1965/1966 genocide and the mass rape in May 1998.

i

n a discussion about both novels in the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia on April 8th, 2008 the historian Hilmar Farid stated that Seno uses the character "I", a psychotic, to break the limitation of expressions in revealing violence. Seno also uses fiction as a strategy to break the limitation of law in revealing the truth about the 1965/66 persecutions. The border between fact and fiction in this case is gone. The character "I" in *Kalatidha* can be seen as the reflection of the fact, but remains hidden in a mysterious world. Literature in time of political repression can be a medium to unveil the fact and the truth.

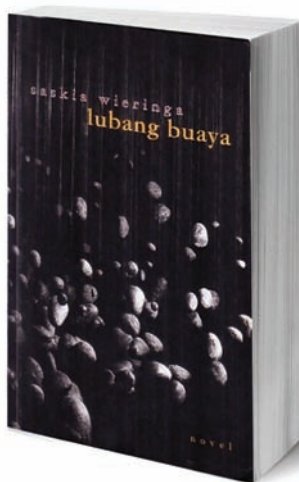
>> **Yose Rizal Triarto**, pemerhati masalah pendidikan, ekonomi, sosial, dan politik. Buku solo pertamanya berjudul **Bumi dan Manusia** (Kumpulan Puisi, Esay, dan Opini Pilihan).

In 30 years during Soeharto's dictatorship, every time she heard the Balinese gamelan (traditional musical instruments), Darmi experienced a horrible trauma. She was aware that dancing was her calling and the sound of gamelan was a call for her to dance.



LASMI

Penulis : Nusya Kuswantin
 Penerbit : Kakilangit Kencana
 Cetakan : 2009
 Tebal : 232 Halaman



LUBANG BUAYA

Penulis : Saskia E. Wieringa
 Penerbit : Metafor Publishing
 Cetakan : 2013
 Tebal : 381 Halaman

the fragrant plantungan¹.

>> by **BANYU BENING**

those hands, they said, were sharper
than knives heir faces, they said, were
scarier than ghosts but her heart was
as hard as stone

she was lost in the piles of accusations
bathed in the screaming sun's radiation
and was named an eternal whore
the widness was already imprinted
neatly terror stayed in the barracks with
barbed wire, surrounded by residents
who were frightened of her for
no reason and emanated hatred

gerwani ² possessed their heads like
 terrifying fire
 but she kept growing, blooming
 the fragrant plantungan
 hatred and fear bore love in her
 the hands that said "whore" to her
 became connective lives

then disease cured
 health restored
 the truth begins to emerge

they come very gradually
 like the dew shaped by the fog

Malang, February 2015

>> Translated by **SHINTA MIRANDA** and **ISSAIAH FANNY ALAM**

¹ Plantungan: the women's camp known for its cruelty and sexual abuse.

² Gerwani: a women's organisation affiliated to the Indonesian communist party. the slander against gerwani was spread in October 1965, many reports claimed that gerwani members raped the generals and sliced their penises.



THE LEGEND of **ISA TREE**

{ **AMAR AR-RISALAH** }

If you're paying attention, you must have heard and seen the news on TV about these large trees, thousands of metres high, sprouting from the midst of what used to be the prisons that housed the communist women, such as Plantungan and Bukit Duri.¹ The Javanese call them Trees of Life; for -they resemble the shadow puppet's *gunungan*, but we also call them Trees of Righteousness. Oftentimes, the victims of the 1965 Gestok climb up those trees, never to return. **Nobody knows where they have gone.**



The Trees of Righteousness, with their far and deep roots, esconce themselves in rickety houses and remain out of sight - throughout the land; they succour - those who believe that hope and truth exist. Their leaves light up the darkness of the land that takes the shape of countless unresolved legal cases. Those cases darken the sky and the people are made restless.

The Trees of Righteousness have now spread themselves to the courtrooms. Their holy branches - find their way into the hearts of the judges, and slowly but surely the backlog of the legal cases grows thinner. Like fungi, their tiny seedlings sprout in high school grounds, on banners, TV commercials, - history books as well as within every family dispute across the land. High is the tree, as high as Truth. Thousands of metres high, the reach of their trunks is wide and mighty, thrusting themselves into the clouds and the rigid history that everyone subscribes to. In case-you're curious, the first Tree of Righteousness was planted in a jail- by Isa Al-Masih. Isa was born without a father, without righteousness that comes from his father. That's always hidden within the dark chasms of history of nations and cities. You must've heard about it but please let Maria, Isa's mother, tell the story of how Righteousness was first planted and how it grew to be a remarkable tree.

* * * *

Sore itu, 2 Oktober 1965, lewat That afternoon on 2 October 1965, I heard on the radio that PKI had staged a coup, and that several generals had been murdered. My father, who was a member of LEKRA, suddenly came home in a panic and asked me, "Where are all my books? I'm going to bury them in the backyard. Clara (that is my name), you take out the PKI flags and those red t-shirts with the PKI emblem and set fire to them!" I heard his orders but kept silent, but I knew something had gone very wrong. Father was panting and sweating, his face panic-stricken. I did what he'd asked me to do. I rooted out all the T-shirts, there were dozens of them. Some had Pak karno's image printed on them. Meanwhile, father started digging a hole in the backyard. He buried all his books after triple-wrapping them in goony sacks. He made a bonfire of the T-shirts.

Around dusk father told us all mother, brother and me to head for the mountain and stay up there for a while. We lived close to a mountain then. But no one hardly ever climbed the wooded mountain. They said spirits lived there, especially the one called jagal manak. We didn't know why father wanted us to go there. But mother understood. When I asked her why, she hushed me. *"Sssh, it's a matter for adults only."* Just before midnight, we set out on foot, having taken some food with us. I was scared. Very scared. We left father home alone. He said he needed to take care of something.

It was around 3 am but I still lay awake, unable to sleep. I was still scared. Even more scared. The woods were so dark and eerie. No wonder no one had dared venture here. Then I heard gunshots and lots of people shouting and screaming from down below. I looked down and saw fire from where my home was. I immediately said a prayer and asked mother to explain. She did, saying that some generals had been killed by the PKI and the government was now hunting down all the party members, including those of LEKRA and GERWANI. Mother taught at Melati kindergarten² in the town centre.

At dawn, around 5 am, under the blue black sky, we raced back to the house. There we saw bloodstains and burn marks on the front door. But we weren't alone. Five soldiers came out and took hold of mother. *"Aren't you Karto's wife? You raped our generals!"* they barked. Mother was visibly scared. The soldiers had guns. They grabbed us and dragged us away. Two trucks were waiting and we got separated. I've never seen mother and brother since that morning. Maybe they are both dead.

Inside the truck, I relied on my hearing alone. A blindfold was wrapped around my eyes. I felt a sense of déjà vu. It reminded me of the stories about the Dutch Police Action father told me about ages ago. We were taken somewhere far from the village. At around three in the afternoon, our journey ended.

I had a gut feeling we'd arrived at some government building; it had the atmosphere of a prison house. Still blindfolded, we were told to alight from the truck and crawl our way into wherever they were taking us. There were lots of others there with me, men and women, probably about forty altogether.

I heard a woman scream, *"Help me! Help! I'm not a PKI. I'm just a teacher!"* A voice shouted, *"Do as I say if you want to live!"* We were told to stand up and walk normally. When my blindfold was removed, I found myself in a large hall. We were told to stand in lines. The men were then ordered to go to another room and got kicked at. The women were told to stay put. We were then questioned one by one: our name, our age.

We were left in the hall till nightfall. No drink. No explanation. Soldiers were everywhere. Then we were taken about fifteen women in all to another place. It was only later that I realised it was part of a prison complex. All of us tried to comfort one another. *"Say a prayer ... just say a prayer ... the country is in turmoil."*

We waited for a few days but nothing happened. For food, we were given a tiny portion of rice and cooked vegetables that smelled foul. Just the one meal a day in the afternoon.

One night I was herded, arms tied, to an interrogation room. On the way, I passed by a dimly-lit hall. There were figures on the floor, face down, stripped naked, all men. I cast my face down and started crying. I saw them being whipped with rattan poles. Perhaps they were still lucky. I saw some men had their anuses brutally shafted with rattan poles. They were forced to admit they were members of the PKI. The men's backs were bloody. I felt numb with pity for them. Finally I arrived at the interrogation room. There were three soldiers there; one of them was probably the leader, judging from his uniform that was different from the other two. I was sure they had deliberately let me watch the torture of the men to make me psychologically weak.

an oil lamp stood in the room. It was the only source of light. One of the men asked my age, my full name and what organisations I belonged to. I had written for my campus newsletter but I knew next to nothing about the PKI. My interrogator, however, was obviously hearing things he didn't like. Abruptly, he asked me to undress. I had no choice but to comply; I was so afraid. I felt nothing but my own fear as I took off my clothes. I stood there in my bra and undies.

At that moment, I felt so shamed and so humiliated. The soldiers just smirked and laughed. Horrible laughter. I just stood there, choking in my own tears. My interrogator chillingly told me if I refused to confess, he could do more. He showed me a few photos. I recognised some of them. I named the people I knew from the set of photos. There were pak Aidit, pak Karno; a number of GERWANI activists in my town. I named them and he shouted. *"So you are a party member then!"* I knew them all right; they were my neighbours, some were my father's friends.

I made up my mind not to confess. An icy cold splash of water hit me. I was shivering, mumbling to myself, to God; why this was happening. I cried bitter tears. I thought of mother and wondered if she was being treated like me. I thought they'd stop there and set me free. But my ordeal wasn't about to end. In the morning, I was taken to another prison, smaller than the first but was still part of the same complex. At night, I was back in another interrogation room. It was a different man from my first torturer. Once again I cried. He asked me to take off my bra and undies. I was completely naked before him. I felt such shame, such anger mixed with powerlessness. So degraded. He kept howling, *"You murdered our generals, didn't you? Our generals weren't toys, you a PKI vixen! You are dirt, traitor to the state and a GERWANI vixen!"*

A soldier told me menacingly that he could use a "weapon" to make me confess more quickly, pointing repeatedly at his crotch. Tears streamed down my face but not a word came out. He asked me again if I wanted to confess. My own fear almost choked me. He then kicked me so hard I keeled over and landed on the floor. He brusquely picked me up and pressed me down on a table. I felt the barrel of a rifle being prodded against my anal opening. It was so painful. He wanted me to confess. I couldn't take it anymore. In the end I shouted out, *"Confess to what?"* I heard his voice thunder. *"Confess that you are a GERWANI slut! A PKI vixen! You raped our generals, didn't you?"*

I thought if I just confessed, my torture would be over that night. It wasn't to be. After my false confession, I was stretched out on the table. His hands probed my genitals while my own and my legs were being held. I couldn't move. Couldn't shake him off. I wept in shame while calling to God. His hand kept prodding until I reached what must've been an orgasm. His hand was covered in some sticky substance which he proceeded to smear on my face. I wept again in torrents of grief and shame that I'd never known before.

Another soldier dropped his pants and said, *"Do it gently! Don't use your teeth!"* He then forced his penis into my mouth. I kept crying and vomited when I felt him ejaculate in my mouth. I felt so nauseated. Then another started prodding my vagina with his fingers roughly. The pain was excruciating. I saw blood on his hand which he smeared on my face.

I looked again and saw his thumb force its way into my vagina. Pain. Enervated. Another then fetched an electric wire and inserted it by God into my vagina. Another wire was fixed to my thumb, another on my nipple. Suddenly the door was flung open, and there stood a woman. I recognised her as a GERWANI cadre of some rank. I'd seen her at the village hall during a ruwatan ceremony. A soldier was shouting at her to watch and asked her what the whole scene was called. Then they electrocuted me. My body jerked senselessly and I passed out. At that point, I couldn't remember feeling more degraded in my whole life.

When the morning came, I was in the corner of the room, still naked and my vagina was swollen and bloodied. My thumbs also had blood on them. Then a soldier walked in and gave me a sarong and some rice in a small cup. I wrapped the sarong around my body and burst into tears. I couldn't understand what was going on. I thought death was preferable now. I was herded into another hall where I saw 25 other women. Some were clearly in their teenage years. I couldn't see any ole woman there. All of us were young. Some had bloodied faces, some were nursing swollen blue hands and I saw one with blood on her vagina. But it seemed I was the only one to have been raped.

All were crying around me. I heard their voices calling on God. In the meantime, I was reeling from shock. I just stood there feeling very numb, unable to think of what to do next. Just before dusk, a soldier brought us rice on a round wicker tray. To our surprise, it was a tidy sum of rice. But then I noticed the rice seemed glassy in parts. I looked closer and found finely sand glass mixed with our rice. They thought if they gave it to us at dusk, we wouldn't see there was glass in the rice. So Pak Harto wanted us to die slow deaths in his custody. I thought how there were others in the society who had committed cruel crimes and how innocent were compared to them and yet here we were being tortured to no end. Famished, we had no choice but to dig into our sandglass rice. We ate using our hands, carefully sorting rice from glass. Sometimes the glass bits pierced our fingers. There wasn't much left to eat, only about a spoonful for each one of us.

Things carried on like this for about three years for me. Every time there was a new girl, she would end up naked with swollen or bloody genitals before long. When she had been given a sarong like we all were, we would try to comfort her. Some would recite the shalawat or other religious prayers to strengthen their souls. I heard screams from the rooms above or across every night, often accompanied by the sickening smell of blood.

Now I know that it was mental torture for us, to get us to confess. I wondered if it was hell after all. Some girls would try to commit suicide, banging their heads against the walls. The soldiers let them do it. One eventually fainted, her head swollen. They took her away. I don't know where but she never returned. Methods of torture that I'd never envisaged also took place behind these walls.

Every week would see a number of girls tortured or moved. Everyone had their turn. I heard from a new girl that it was better in here than out there. She said before her arrest, she was on the run from men wearing turbans who wanted our kind dead.

She'd seen her friend lynched to death while carrying her baby. The baby ended up being left on the street but was left unmolested. These things happened every night, so it was apparently better to be inside. It was safer. The people outside were running amok everywhere, goaded and egged on by the army: they were encouraged to find members of GERWANI, LEKRA, PR and other organisations with a link to PKI. It was said dozens were being beheaded every night or burned to death in the sugar cane fields.

One of my prison friends eventually got pregnant. She was quite goodlooking. Her belly got bigger as the days passed. She told me she didn't know which one was the father because so many had ravished her. When her time to deliver came, I shouted out to get the soldiers to take her to a hospital. It fell on deaf ears.

One night, when we were all asleep, we were woken up by a baby crying loudly. Our friend had given birth. Then we were astonished to see what looked like a date tree next to the baby. A halo of light seemed to envelop it. The light was so bright we all could see one another. The baby was crying but when we came near it, it chuckled. Somehow, the baby was already very clean.





We then searched for the baby's mother but she was nowhere in sight. We were astounded, wondering if she had turned into the date tree. The baby seemed to have been bathed and was wrapped in a lightly scented cloth. I held the baby and kissed it many times. Having it in my arms made me feel at peace. It was as if the torture and ordeals had been banished from my mind. We were all captivated by the miraculous child, and then we gave him a strange name, a name we heard in mysterious whispers. Isa, Isa we chanted the name. He seemed to understand us. He chuckled happily every time we called his name. We all thought of him as God because he was our miracle, our peace.

Inside that chamber of captivity, we all started crying but the tears were of happiness. It was the first time in years we could cry such tears. They felt warm, streaming down our happy faces. It was all thanks to Isa, it was all because of him. In the meantime, the tree took root in the darkness of the night.

Dawn came and the soldiers came bursting in, looking shell-shocked. It was as if they'd become aware of something. They took Isa away from us, yelling, "Give him to us! This is big!" I never heard anything afterwards in the press but some friends started whispering. Isa was born. He would save us, though I saw a man the next day.

He was in his 30s and looked very clean as if he'd just washed himself. Fragrance wafted from his body, as he walked in his white robe like that of a priest or kyai. He came in front of my cell. He had shoulder length hair but didn't look like an Indonesian. I was surprised he had no guard with him. "Are you a provincial official? Please help us, we are innocent!" I begged him. He merely replied that history couldn't be altered, that history was sacred, and beyond his power.

* * * *

Twelve years later, decades later, after Soeharto stepped down and died, and our generation have grown old and stored the memories of 1965, in the liver. We, the former prisoners, still feel tremendous pain. We have seen many Isas come up to public and crucify themselves so that the true history can be revealed. While the tree that grew in our prison cell, is becoming larger and larger. We named it the Tree of Truth, because it always reminds us of the historical truth I mentioned earlier.

On the side of the road, if you are careful, you will see many crosses that are not named, they belonged to the children of the political prisoners who were raped and no one knows who their fathers are. The Tree of Truth, grew bigger and stronger. He broke through the prison roof, destroying floors, and in the end completely demolishing the prison building.

These days, Jesus often walks pass, and looks through the windows of the tortured victims of 1965"

Its roots spread, rapidly, toward highways, and penetrated other prisons. In Plantungan, Wonodadi, Purwodadi, Bukit Duri, all of them - the tree roots that penetrated, grew new Isas in those prisons and freed the female prisoners in them. The roots also penetrated the courthouse and shrubs grew. They also penetrated the Palace. They assured that the law enforcement took notice of what really happened.

The entire camp where I was imprisoned and the night of the birth of Jesus, has been destroyed. Many of the prisoners who were raped, climbed the tree and never returned. People who were born after the mass-murder of 1965, were astonished, and some of them tried to uncover the mysteries of history. The women who did not return from the tree were considered dead witnesses. Mysteriously, Jesus-Christ's were born from their womb while they were in prison. I myself still do not know why I was detained and then classified in a certain category. My mother, father, brother - I do not know where all of them are, but I just accept that they are dead.

These days, I often meet Jesus in the markets, in Churches, in Mosques, at the roadside, and I believe only female victims of that shameful 1965 purge, were able to see Him. And if asks, he will answer: "My father is history, that became flesh. My mother is Maryam, who was raped so that this period exists "

Before leaving, he always says, "There is no white history, but all history is sacred. . . "And so, every victim of genocide, who were pregnant and gave birth, their sons were named Isa. He said his father is God, and the soldiers were just the mediator. And Jesus was born to remind us about that cruel 1965.

Today, when look back to ruins of the first prison where Jesus was born, the Mother tree is enormous: thousands of meters high. It has stabbed the sky, and the community can see it from any where. Because of that tree, people start to think back of justice, for us the victims of violence and who had committed this brutality.

Finally there was a court case, as the fruit of the Tree of Truth Isa. I will continue to look after the tree, so that people always remember that event, so that history is no longer manipulated.

Now many officials who have visited the tree, also participate in providing care. We have heard: in Bali, fifty thousand. In East Java, seventy thousand. In Jakarta, West Java, Jogjakarta - all the numbers are engraved in the Tree of Truth. Millions of men and women were victimised. Many deputy ministers, ministers, commissions, and military commanders finally determine to open up this history.



DOES THE SPECTRE OF COMMUNISM HAUNT INDONESIA



{ TEDI CHO }

A spectre is haunting Europe-the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, the French radicals and German police-spies. - Karl Marx dan Frederick Engels.

The first paragraph of the Communist Manifesto written by **Karl Marx** and **Frederick Engels** seems to have accurately predicted that communism would become a spectre everywhere, at least for anyone in power opposed to its aims. But it is not how communism originated that needs to be discussed, nor supernatural apparitions and other superstitions; rather, it is the hatred of the status quo for communism, which makes it a veritable demon to be cast out, by whatever

means, even if it means massacring those who uphold its banner (by forming political parties) or those who simply sympathise with its aims.

In Indonesia, the massacre did take place, 50 years ago. The victims were probably millions. Army General Sarwo Edhie once proudly claimed 3 million had been exterminated women were raped, brutally tortured and then killed. Many were also imprisoned without any trial

The incident often known as the G30S left a dark mark on the nation's history, a human tragedy en par with the Nazi Holocaust. From the spilling of blood arose the New Order regime, a false messiah claimed to have vanquished the dreaded spectre.

Not only were lives lost in the tragedy that precipitated the fall of **President Sukarno** but, as **John Roosa** put it, the Indonesian identity changed radically after 1965. The old aspirations for a nation that was democratic, just, civilised with the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (the Unity in Diversity) as a cornerstone were interred alongside the millions of corpses whose lives had been extinguished. Such was the sacrifice to install a capitalist regime known as the New Order.

The new decadent capitalist system is still in place now. The New Order succeeded in leading Indonesia onto a path of destruction and transforming it into a country devoid of guidelines for its existence, a country which has forsaken friends and bows to its enemies. Soeharto led the regime for 32 years. He was consummate in tinkering with the machination of the state to mould the nation into dreading communism.

Known as *The Smiling General*, **Soeharto** consolidated his version of history by sponsoring historical films that spewed out manipulations, banning books for their content and through other repressive means. He didn't stop at that: he also made sure that parliament pass the TAP MPR XXV/1966 which outlawed the dissemination of communism, Marxism and Leninism. The new law was to be his arsenal for neutralising citizens indicted to be communists.

There was another factor in the purge of the left. **Horst Henry Geerken** in his book **A Magic Gecko** asserts that the United States through the CIA had played a role in the human tragedy and the subsequent ousting of President Sukarno. The German author is validated by a documentary entitled **The Shadow Play** (CIA roles in Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966). What was the mission here? To prevent the PKI from entrenching its ideology in the largest Southeast Asian country. Moreover, the socialist sentiments rife in Indonesia at the time were seen as a threat to American hegemony.

This was the turning point in the nation's ideology. The fall of the Old Order to make way for the New Orders eventually bore its fruits for the latter's sponsors. A year after Sukarno stepped down as president, the government passed the Foreign Investment Act (PMA). It became the Trojan Horse by which the imperialist forces returned, after they were expelled by the revolutionary forces. They returned for the purpose of draining Indonesia of its natural resources.

The Sukarnoist slogan "*Go to hell with your aid*" was no longer to be heard or seen plastered on street corners. Indonesia also became a beggar state in need of foreign aid, putting an end to Sukarno's *Trisakti* vision in which Indonesia was to be an economically sovereign country.

The shackles of imperialism are still as strong today, as real as the stigma that might as well be branded on the foreheads of family members of the 1965 victims. Indonesia is impoverished today because its riches have been exploited by foreigners. Our only abundance is in the number of human rights abuses that remain unresolved.

Joko Widodo, better known as Jokowi, also promised to have TAP MPR XXV/1966 annulled if elected as president. Unfortunately, now a year in office, he has not started proceedings to honour his promises to rectify the 1965 human rights abuses.

The resolution of the 1965 Tragedy can take both judicial and no-judicial forms. In other words, both processes of national reconciliation and law enforcement can go hand in hand. National reconciliation is important so that both victims and perpetrators can heal together through forgiveness. A gesture of goodwill in the form of an official apology from the state for its manipulation of history will also be needed. The government can also set up an ad hoc human rights tribunal to begin investigation and prosecution of those proved to be guilty. All these are aimed at ensuring that no such tragedy will ever happen again.

Why has it become urgent to resolve the issue? The Coordinator of KontraS **Haris Azhar** believes that if the state feels it can get away with past human rights abuses, a sense of impunity will follow, leading to future transgressions. The question is if we do not exorcise the demons of injustice now, when do we propose to do it? It's unwise to let the wounds fester and the old sin go unpunished.

The shackles of imperialism are still as strong today, as real as the stigma that might as well be branded on the foreheads of family members of the 1965 victims. Indonesia is impoverished today because its riches have been exploited by foreigners. Our only abundance is in the number of human rights abuses that remain unresolved.

Despite the existence of the Declaration of Universal Human Right by the United Nations, justice and rights have so far been denied the victims and families of the 1965 Genocide. The declaration itself remains largely ignored in Indonesia. It is apparent that not only does the spectre of communism haunt the nation, but the ghosts of Soeharto and his New Order also still roam the land.

>> **TEDI CHO**, journalist and activist of the People's Democratic Party (PRD)

>> Translated by **JUKE CAROLINA** and **JOHANNES NUGROHO**.

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